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UNESCO PUBLIC LIBRARY MANUALS

ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by

CARL THOMSEN
EDWARD SYDNEY
MIRIAM D. TOMPKINS

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Public Library Extension

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UNESCO PUBLIC LIBRARY MANUALS. 3

ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

TRAINING CENTRE
10 JAN 1958
GANDHIGRAM

LIBRARY CARD.
Name of

Discussion group in a rural community organized by the county librarian.

ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by

CARL THOMSEN
Chief Librarian, Copenhagen

EDWARD SYDNEY
Borough Librarian, Leyton

MIRIAM D. TOMPKINS
Associate Professor of Library Service, Columbia University

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Unesco has a special responsibility for the development of those educational, scientific and cultural services which help to bridge the gap between the specialists and the ordinary citizens of the world. There is always a danger that in any period when great advancements are being made in science and learning the intellectuals may be out of touch with the people and the people ignorant of what their cultural leaders are doing. Of the many types of service which civilized man has designed to bridge this gap there are few which have such wide possibilities and such need for development as the various services contributed by public libraries. No one who has learned to read beyond the level of bare literacy and who wishes to play his full part in the life of his community can possibly keep in touch with what is happening elsewhere in the world, with what, even, is happening at his doorstep, without recourse to books and periodicals, but few people in the world can buy all the books they need for their own personal use. Therefore Unesco cannot hesitate to do all in its power to see that there are more public libraries and that wherever they exist they are as good as possible. Public libraries in their simplest function exist as storehouses of knowledge and of experience which are freely open to people of every class, race, religion and age, but in recent years public libraries, wherever they have been well developed, have accepted far wider responsibilities than those of passive storehouses. They have an active part to play in adult education, making use of new techniques of communication, such as radio, films, discussion groups and exhibitions, so that the people who use libraries may be helped to read wisely and well and may be led to pay critical attention to the significant problems of their place and time.

At present it is unfortunately true that there are few countries in the world where the full possibilities of public library work are understood and there are many parts of the world where public library services can as yet be hardly said to exist. These facts are well understood by Unesco and, therefore, following a successful summer school for public librarians which was held in England in 1948, we have undertaken the publication of a series of manuals to make the best possible experience in public library work widely known throughout the world. These three

manuals, are being published in 1950, and will deal with some of the fundamental questions of library work: training for librarianship, the role of the library in adult education and the extension of public library activity to meet the needs of scattered and rural populations and special groups in the community.

They have been written by librarians principally for librarians, because the professional workers in librarianship must carry the chief responsibility for the development of their services, but they have not been written so as to be exclusively of interest to librarians. Indeed, it is my hope that they will be read by government officials, educators and others with a responsibility for the provision of public library services and for the professional training of librarians. Public library progress depends largely upon the competence and vision of librarians, but substantial results can be obtained only if the librarians receive the support of the educational authorities and the legislative and financial authorities of their countries.

The authors of these manuals write freely as individuals expressing their own opinions. They have consulted the papers produced at the International Summer School and have received advice from Unesco but not with the object of laying down Unesco rules for public librarianship. Certain principles of library service undoubtedly appear which may be universally acceptable, but, as several of the authors have pointed out, a living library service will be so closely keyed to the social, cultural and economic conditions of its region that there must be widely differing interpretations in practice. That point is brought out in this book by descriptions of the adult education work in the public libraries of three countries — Denmark, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. These three nations were chosen as examples because their public libraries are among the most active in the adult education field and because contrasting patterns of adult education activities have developed in them as a result of differing national conditions. Other countries might also have been included if space had permitted, but the three selected should, through the variety of their programmes, serve to indicate the main types of adult education activities effective in public libraries.

The value of public library educational services is not clearly realized in all parts of the world, but encouraging progress was made at the International Conference on Adult Education held in Denmark during June, 1949. Delegates from 29 countries joined in passing the following resolution:

> *"This conference records its recognition of the essential contribution of museums and Public Libraries to Adult Education.*

Appropriately to the circumstances of each member State the Conference supports Unesco's statement 'The Public Library — A Living Force for Popular Education' and recommends its consideration, and so far as possible, its adoption in Member States, as a basis of policy."

This is the first resolution on the role of public libraries in adult education to be adopted by an international group of educators, and I feel confident that it will be a stimulus to the widespread development of library programmes of the kind described in this manual.

JAIME TORRES BODET
Director-General.

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PART ONE

DENMARK

by

CARL THOMSEN

Chief Librarian, Copenhagen

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE LIBRARY SYSTEM IN DENMARK

COMPARED TO GREAT BRITAIN and the United States of America, the library movement in Denmark is a young one. Only forty years ago the first plans for organizing a modern library system were made, and only thirty years ago librarians were first given a technical education. Much of the energy that could be applied to library work by the first generation, had to be used on such basic objectives as (1) the establishment of new libraries, (2) the provision of a solid financial foundation for their operation, and (3) the formation of a framework for future development.

In this early period, the use of libraries by the public grew rapidly. Staffs were numerically inadequate, and it was difficult for them to give full attention both to routine tasks in lending departments, reading rooms, etc... and to wider activities, such as making the library the natural centre of popular education.

For an understanding of the present library situation in Denmark some general facts must be borne in mind :

1. Denmark is one of Europe's smallest countries, with only 4 million inhabitants.

2. Class distinctions in Denmark are less marked than in most countries. There is only one language, one nationality, one religion.

3. Communication between differents parts of the country and between town and country is easy.

4. The public library is, like the general school, free for all. There are no illiterates, and nobody can say : I should have liked to study this or that subject, but the books were not available.

5. The public library is operated from public funds — the State and the municipalities contribute more than ninety percent. Private contributions are of practically no importance, and thus there is no danger that business interests will influence library policies.

6. The neutrality of public libraries is generally recognized. All political, social and religious opinions have the same right to representation in the book collections.

7. Thanks to the division of tasks and the co-operation between the scientific and the public libraries, the latter can devote their energies

to general education and literary recreation, and at the same time act as outposts of the special and scientific libraries.

Thomas Dössing [1], the leader of the Danish public library movement for the last quarter of a century, has formulated our public libraries programme as follows : "Public libraries should serve the general education of the people at every stage of development, and support and supplement the work done in the schools... Further, they should supplement and directly support the free work for popular education (lectures and study circles). Public libraries are thus libraries for the whole population. They are not paupers' libraries, but libraries for educational work with all social classes."

HAS THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OBLIGATIONS TO ADULT EDUCATION ?

Public libraries cannot fulfil their responsibilities in isolation from educational work. Fine work can be, and has been, done by libraries that have concentrated on the task of making their book collections as comprehensive and valuable as possible and creating the best imaginable cataloguing techniques for the guidance of readers. Giving the best service to each reader who applies to the lending or reference department of his library may well take up so much time and energy that many librarians feel fully content if they cope with this job, and dismiss *a priori* the idea that they should have additional obligations. It is better, they say, properly to solve the problems which meet us every day in the library than to spread our strength over outside tasks which may be done better by others. To this we reply : The obligations of the library go as far as the population's need of service is felt : the librarian has tasks outside the library too, and the full extent of these tasks can be gauged only through the librarian's personal contact with the other agencies concerned with popular education.

For instance, a local school, situated within the area served by a library, will as a rule have its own collection of books, but it will be both the school's and the library's loss if co-operation between the two institutions is not established. The library will be able to advise the school regarding the arrangement and renewal of its collection of books, so as to make this as effective as means permit. At the same time requests made by the school to the library for materials

1. Thomas Dössing was chief of the State Inspectorate of Libraries 1920-43, and died in 1946 as Danish plenipotentiary to the USSR.

Study circle for young men.

Instruction in use of the library.

for teachers' and pupils' papers will stimulate expansion of the library's stock of books with special consideration for the school's requirements. If the librarian is, as he should be, one of the visiting teachers at the school, he will be able to make the library better appreciated by the pupils.

If he recognizes the obligation to establish contact with other educational agencies, the librarian will also feel it a natural part of his activities to join the local Workers' Educational Association committee so that he can follow its work at close quarters and encourage use of the library by study circles, courses and evening classes.

THE LIBRARIAN'S TRAINING

For the public libraries of a country to be a factor in general education, staffs must be selected not primarily as worshippers of learning or experts in cataloguing but as intermediaries between the world of books and all classes of the population. The librarian's training should develop his talent for relating his work to education in general.

The formal demands on those who want to become librarians may seem modest : — the applicant must merely have matriculated or have passed the final examination of a teachers' training college. The apprenticeship lasts for three years and the training is completed by one year at the State Library School. During the three years the pupils serve in a library and also receive some theoretical instruction. Of the certificated librarians 70-80 % are women.

In judging Danish recruiting and training in the light of the problems to be discussed here, it must be admitted that experience has revealed certain deficiencies. Only a minority of the pupils has a practical knowledge of free educational work, and the training does little to remedy this. As in some other countries library work has been considered a fitting job for refined girls of the upper middle class who "love books" but are unequal to the strains of a university career, while not content with say a mere clerkship. In some countries a university degree is the sole qualification for becoming a librarian (the practical and theoretical library training is then shorter, but nor does this guarantee the right type of recruiting. The solution seems to be that nobody should be appointed a librarian in a public library unless he has shown an interest in, and a knowledge of, some sort of free educational work.

At several libraries in Denmark which train apprentices it has become customary to demand that an apprentice must wait a year

after the matriculation examination, using this "waiting time" for improving his reading, and attending university courses or a village high school. This last has proved of particular value, as the librarians to be, who are recruited for the most part from the middle classes of the towns, not only get acquainted with a characteristic branch of free educational work but also meet representatives of other social classes, especially the youth of the rural population.

CHAPTER II

FREE EDUCATIONAL WORK IN DENMARK

A COMPLETE SURVEY of the various forms of free educational work in Denmark need not be given here. This kind of work takes different forms in different countries, the common trait being this : free educational work does not aim directly at vocational instruction but at the development of the individual according to his ability and inclination, intellectually, socially and manually.

Branches of educational work appropriate for library co-operation include :

The voluntary adolescents' school or evening school, which carries on the work of the ordinary schools in developing useful skills: the mother tongue, foreign languages, arithmetic, woodwork, domestic science, etc., and gives the participants elementary instruction in sociology, history and literature. These schools are supported by public funds : the teaching staff, especially in the rural districts, consists for the most part of teachers from the ordinary schools. The folk high school, a peasants' school, supported partly by public funds, partly by the pupils themselves, gives the young an opportunity to leave their work for five or six months to acquire knowledge and inspiration through group contacts and through listening to lectures which aim mainly at a Christian-national view of life. The Workers' Educational Association, which in Denmark is supported by the Social Democratic party and by the trade unions through collective contributions : — Out of this movement has grown the idea that not only the workers' political and economic liberation, but also their cultural development, should be the responsibility of the labour movement itself — though the agencies for education such as schools, libraries, etc., furnished by the community for the benefit of the whole population, should be used to the largest extent possible. The church associations and the political youth's associations; the women's organizations, which encourage the active participation of women in solving social problems. The University Extension movement, which provides lectures to initiate the ordinary man into the achievements of science. Broadcasting, spreading a multitude of educational lectures and topical discussions over the country. Lastly the Press,

which mainly because of the size its circulation is the most important agency, keeping the people informed about politics, economics and sociology and acting as a forum where experts in various fields discuss artistic, literary, scientific, philosophical and religious matters.

CHAPTER III

THE JOINT TASKS OF THE LIBRARIES

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT for free educational work is that books be available to the ordinary man and presented to him in a way which makes him like reading them. Decisive for the success of adult education is the availability not only of textbooks but of books which give to each participant an opportunity for informal reading. Public libraries should be adjusted to the needs of the educational work and buy their books accordingly. They should be in touch with all the existing forms of educational work within the area they serve, and collaborate in all problems best solved jointly for a greater part of the country or for the whole country.

Among the tasks to be undertaken co-operatively is the *publication of printed lists and readers' guides*. Every modern library, big or small, has a list of its books in the form of a card catalogue accessible to the public, and this will always be the most complete and important help in approaching the books. But if a librarian is really to guide people in their choice of reading matter, a printed list that each of them can have for his personal use at home and in the library will be of value. As a rule, however, it will be too expensive and laborious for each library to publish its own lists and keep them up to date. Co-operative publishing is more practicable, especially in countries where collaboration among libraries has already been established, as in Denmark. At intervals (in Denmark every three years) joint lists are published, comprising a large selection of the current literature in large and small libraries respectively. The lists are printed in great numbers, so that the cost is only a fraction of what it would be if each library published its own. This method does not mean that the book collections of the participating libraries are identical, but only that books are selected which in the opinion of the editor ought to be found in libraries of the size for which the list is intended.

This method has been used for more than 25 years in Denmark, with constantly growing support from the libraries, and has made it possible for libraries not only to guide each reader but to establish contact with schools, courses, study circles, etc.

The same method has been used in Denmark in the publication

of readers' guides ("Reading with a purpose") and annotated book lists on special subjects. In this way it has been possible gradually to map out all the main parts of the literature which interests the ordinary reader, and greatly to facilitate reading guidance. In recent years Denmark has also tried to solve co-operatively the problem of printing a periodical for library readers. Six times a year an illustrated paper of twelve pages "Biblioteksnyt" ("News from the Library"), is published. It contains annotated lists of the most valuable current books, readers' guides on topical subjects, and a list of recommended magazine articles.

For the solution of common problems such as those mentioned, an agency which can undertake editing and publishing is necessary. Since 1939 such an institution has been at work in Denmark. "Folkebibliotekernes bibliografiske Kontor" ("The Bibliographical Bureau of the Public Libraries"), maintained by subsidies from the State and by the income from its publications, has carried out admirably a great number of the bibliographical and other tasks which are best solved jointly. Thanks to the existence of this institution it is now considered a matter of course in Danish libraries that every problem which is too big for a single library will be solved by co-operation. This co-operation is particularly valuable to small libraries in the rural districts, which are run by amateur librarians (as a rule elementary school teachers), as these libraries are of course quite unequal to the task of publishing printed lists and readers' guides.

In Denmark it is easy to use these common facilities, as it is an established principle that no public library need limit itself to its own stock of books but can inter-loan books from other libraries.

The central library system, begun in 1914 and now fully developed, co-ordinates collaboration among small and large libraries. Every parish library in the country is supported by a central library, which supplements its book stock, assists it in the selection of books, does technical work for it, and acts as an intermediary with the scientific and technical libraries. Thus the small library with a stock of a few hundred volumes is able to give to its readers the same service as is rendered by the big town libraries, and to help effectively in local education work in study circles, evening schools, etc.

Another common undertaking for all libraries is radio educational work. Only one broadcasting system exists in Denmark, the State Broadcasting Corporation, maintained by listeners' licenses. Practically every home in Denmark has a wireless set, and the fee — 15 kroner per year — is moderate. People in Denmark listen a great deal, and transmissions of lectures and study circles are an essential part

of the programmes, though news service and music predominate. Libraries are aware that the effectiveness of educational transmissions depends on collaboration between the libraries and the State Broadcasting Corporation, so that at every opportunity the listeners can be directed to literature on the subject they have just heard discussed on the radio. This has led to the establishment of a contact committee consisting of representatives of the lecture department of the State Broadcasting Corporation and of the scientific and public libraries. A librarian has been attached to the Broadcasting Corporation, with the duty of editing the literature references published in connection with the broadcasts. It is planned to issue weekly book lists for the lectures of the coming week, to help libraries arrange exhibitions of the recommended publications. Investigations show that listeners take an interest in the literature related to the broadcasts.

The committee has arranged for the central librarians of the country, when they hold their annual meeting in Copenhagen in 1949, to spend an extra day in discussing with the programme chiefs of the Broadcasting Corporation the interaction between listeners' and readers' interests.

Among the transmissions so far initiated by the committee are the following :

A broadcast from a parish library, where the readers expressed their views on their choice of books, and the librarian talked about the library.

A round table discussion by reviewers, booksellers and librarians on : Who is responsible for book production ?

A discussion by readers, reviewers and librarians : Do the literary reviewers of the daily papers do their job ?

At present a survey is being made in ten libraries, large and small, to find out whether books mentioned on broadcasts are used more than other books on the same subject.

There have been study circle radio programmes in Denmark since 1941. The method is this : the Broadcasting Corporation's department for adult education has textbooks written on two or three subjects. For each textbook a reader's guide is prepared, generally by a librarian, which indicates literature to be used as a supplement to each of the chapters in the book, and points out problems that may give rise to discussion. Ten or twelve broadcasts concerning the material in the text book are given, as a rule fortnightly. All over the country libraries display these textbooks and guides, and posters encourage the formation of radio discussion clubs. Libraries which have study circle rooms with wireless sets place these quarters at

the disposal of the clubs; other club meetings are held in private houses. In each broadcast the listeners are taken through a chapter of the textbook, frequently by several speakers. After the transmission the speeches are discussed in the clubs, and questions which cannot be answered by the publications available are sent to the Broadcasting Corporation to be answered before the next session.

Examples of subjects which have been featured in the study circle transmissions are : — The Citizen in Denmark, Denmark's Trades, Money and Finance, Law and Justice, Everyday Psychology, Danish Social Fiction, Money and Production, What is Christianity? Home and Children, From Old to New Liberalism, Sidelights on Danish Painting, Danish Democracy, Fundamentals of Music.

The contact committee has taken considerable interest in this aspect of broadcasting and has endeavoured to create the greatest possible accordance between the reader's guides used with the programmes and the actual stock of books in public libraries. There is no doubt that well established collaboration between broadcasting and the library system of a country is of value to educational work.

Libraries in Denmark have recently begun co-operation in another field of adult education. Since 1948 the State Film Bureau, which distributes cultural and documentary films and a selection of the best domestic and foreign pictures, has stationed 16 mm. sound film projectors in thirty of the thirty-three central libraries in the country. At each a librarian is made the intermediary between the Film Bureau and the associations, schools, courses, etc., which want to use films in their work. These "film librarians" have prepared for the new work by attending a course of lectures, discussions, and film showings. The librarians then call together representatives of associations, schools, etc., in their districts for a demonstration evening in the library, where loan arrangements are discussed and films shown.

If libraries know how to use the chance thus given them, they will get into contact with new readers who will find their way to books via the film. Film study circles will also probably be created throughout the country to evaluate films and develop discrimination.

The daily press is a factor in popular education which the libraries cannot overlook. By the establishment of a press secretariat Denmark's Library Association has tried to keep the whole press informed on any subject in which the libraries take an interest. Every library, through collaboration with the local daily press, should also see that every opportunity is used to attract attention to good literature. Several libraries have arranged for weekly newspaper publication of book lists in connection with topical subjects, exhibitions, or local lectures.

CHAPTER IV

TASKS OF THE INDIVIDUAL LIBRARY

TURNING TO THE TASKS of the individual library in the creation of contacts with local free educational work, the first thing is to make an inventory of the institutions, schools, associations, etc., which have adult education programmes, and then to find out what the library can do to help in this work.

Suppose that in a small town we have : (1) a University Extension association which gives popular scientific lectures; (2) a lecture association with a winter programme of say six lecture and recitation evenings; (3) an evening school organizing classes in sociology, modern history and hygiene; (4) a W. E. A. branch with study circles in local government, trade unionism and social fiction; (5) a political youth's association arranging three public discussion meetings on topical political subjects; (6) an unpolitical women's association interested in feminist literature; (7) a housewives' association which arranges demonstrations in baking and preserving, and holds a discussion on domestic economics; (8) a Y. M. C. A. branch with a China meeting on its programme; (9) a Rotary club, which wishes to have a library lecture, and (10) an art association planning an exhibition of amateur art.

As a neutral institution, it is only natural for the library to help to co-ordinate the individual plans of the different institutions and associations. In the first half of September, when the plans for the winter are beginning to take shape, the librarian invites the leaders to a meeting in the library where everybody can become acquainted with the others' plans. If appropriate, the librarian can suggest changes to avoid clashes in dates, etc. Some librarians have acted as registrars of meetings. When the leaders of the local associations arrange a meeting, they inform the librarian who makes certain that no other meetings are scheduled for the same time.

The representatives of the library at the preparatory meeting describe the services that the library will be able to give the associations in their activities, in addition to putting rooms at their disposal. The library offers to furnish the study circles, for instance, with the necessary literature for the duration of the circles. The evening

school receives an offer of a two-hour lesson in the use of the library. For the University Extension association, reading lists relating to the lectures can be worked out in collaboration with the lecturer, and a similar offer is made to the political youth association and to the women's association. An exhibition of books and pamphlets on domestic economics may be offered to the housewives' association, and the Rotary club will be offered a lecture from the librarian on the importance of the library to trade. For the art association a selection of art literature will be displayed in connection with the asssociation's exhibition of amateur art.

As a rule, all these offers are gratefully accepted, and if the library succeeds in making good all its promises, many of those participating in the educational work in the town will become friends and users of the library.

CHAPTER V

THE LIBRARY AS INITIATOR

UNLIMITED READING is often nothing more than a superficial book gluttony, which has nothing to do with education and development. The pedagogical problem of reading is, in our time more than ever, to induce as many as possible to select their reading with forethought and really to absorb what they have read by reflection or by discussion with others. The study circles are to an extent contributing to a solution of the problem, but it most be admitted that much study circle work takes place in associations which aim at educating their members not to be good readers but to be active partisans of some cause or other, political, social, or religious. The study circle work thereby becomes propaganda rather than adult education. In this situation the library, which has to be a neutral institution, has a particular task : namely to contribute to the education of good readers, those who search for knowledge and the facts before making up their minds on questions which interest them.

A number of librarians have felt this to be the most important of all their tasks and have given much time and energy to participating in study circle work. If in Denmark this has not been the case with a greater number of librarians, that is due to : (1) the above mentioned defects in the recruiting and training of librarians; (2) the extensive evening service in libraries, which keeps the librarians occupied until eight, nine or ten o'clock for three or four evenings a week; and (3) the fact that about 70-80 per cent of the librarians are women, who — particularly the married women — have domestic duties in addition to their professional work.

As most readers are looking for fiction — 65-70 per cent of all books lent by Danish libraries — it is primarily in this field that librarians can make an effort to create better reading habits. This is done in different ways. During the winter some libraries arrange readers' evenings, when the librarians themselves or friends of the libraries discuss some author and read samples of his works, or review the literature on some subject, such as the Fate of the Emigrants, Antisemitism in Literature, China in Literature, the Russian Revolution in Literature, etc. By such readers' evenings librarians attempt to

inculcate the value of systematic reading, whether the works of one author or of several authors on related subjects.

During the occupation, *Aarhus* (about 100,000 inhabitants), began a regular winter series of literature evenings. At each an author was discussed whose works, in the judgment of the librarian, were less well known than they deserved to be. Selections from the books were read to give the audience an impression of the writing. The attendance at these meetings varied from 70 to 200. Another example is *Gentofte*, where the programme for the winter of 1947 was :

January : Lecture : Soya, Kjeld Abell, Kaj Munk (Danish dramatists). Amateurs recited from the works of the three authors after the lecture.
February : Lecture : The Marriage of Figaro, accompanied by records.
March : Lecture : Russian Literature from Pushkin to our time.

During two winters, the branch library in *Nörrebro* (Copenhagen) has presented "borrowers evenings" in the reading room (the library having no special lecture room). Subjects have included : Copenhagen Novels, Nis Petersen (Danish author), Listener and Reader, The History of Nörrebro, Greenland in Literature, Kristoffer Janson (Norwegian author), Ivar Lo-Johansson (Swedish author).

At these meetings the audiences are as a rule passive, even if questions are put to the speakers after the lectures. But some librarians are keen that an exchange of opinions should take place, and have arranged discussion evenings when the subject is a book old enough for a great number of readers to know and at the same time sufficiently new to be of current interest. At these discussion evenings it is the librarian's job to stimulate the participants by briefly relating the plot of the book, perhaps saying a few words about the author, and finally trying to fix on problems in the book for an exchange of views. Experience shows that valuable results may be obtained by such evenings. Many people feel inclined to discuss with others books they have read and which have impressed them. Their attention is called by the discussion to details or points of view which have escaped them, and often they are moved to re-read the book.

An example is *Nyköbing* (20.000 inhabitants) where the library regularly invites its readers to "conversation circles" on some author or book. The branch library in *Vesterbro* (Copenhagen) in the winter of 1948-49 started similar "conversation circles" for the readers. The subject of the first two evenings were : Steinbeck's *The Wayward Bus* and Laura Z. Hobson's *Gentleman's Agreement*.

An extensive programme has been planned for the coming season.

A sequel to these discussion evenings on single books is the study circles. These circles demand much work from the leaders, who throughout the winter once a week or fortnight must plan and lead the meetings in addition to performing their daily work in the library and keeping abreast of literature in general. But usually the librarians who undertake this work are satisfied with the results and encouraged to continue year after year. It is, however, obvious that the librarians, whose number is small in comparison to the population (in Danish towns there is on an average one librarian to every 6,000 inhabitants) cannot cope singlehanded with the task of getting together everybody who wants to cultivate his reading in this way. The librarians must therefore find co-operation outside the library. So far in Denmark relatively few intellectuals have joined in popular educational work — while in England, for instance, university people to a large extent may be counted on to help. The same classes in Denmark are so badly paid, that but few have been tempted to sacrifice their leisure hours. There are now, however, signs of a change and some of the best educated people are sharing their knowledge with their less fortunate fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER VI

WORK WITH ADOLESCENTS

IF LIBRARIES are to contribute actively to the development of the adult reader's understanding of literature, it is obvious that the period immediately following school age cannot be ignored. Only by special work with adolescents will it be possible to throw a bridge across the gap between the activities of the school and the adult's self-education.

Many young people between 15 and 20 do not receive general adult education. Some of them go to technical, business, agricultural or municipal continuation schools, but large numbers of the unskilled youth get no instruction at all, as the youth school in Denmark is not compulsory. In these years, which are of great importance to their later development, they should find in the libraries encouragement for their interests and guidance adapted to their special wants. Too often it happens that young people after leaving school finish with all intellectual activities, and are seized by a primitive thirst for liberty which is not always the best starting point for intellectual development. In Denmark, as elsewhere, many have realized that this reaction against the school is due to the fact that schools too often act more like a filling station than a source of inspiration, and that some of the problems of youth are to be solved — if any solution is possible — by a radical alteration of school methods. But even with the most perfect school, there will be a vacuum for many people in the years immediately after school. If the library in these years manages to catch their attention, it may lead to a valuable contact for life. But it is not sufficient that the library confine its efforts to buying books specially suitable for young readers and placing them in a separate collection and, at the same time — as it is done in some libraries — denying readers under 18 years old access to the rest of the books in the library, for fear that books intended for mature readers will fall into wrong hands.

In relations with young readers librarians have a definite task of guidance. Some have realized the necessity of having a special youth's librarian to serve young people between 15 and 20, one who keeps abreast of the interests of the young and the literature appealing

to them and becomes their trusted man in the library. He should seek out the young where they meet in clubs and unions, and be available when the club wants him to tell what the library has to offer. He is the one to present the adults' library to the young before they leave school : this presentation should take place as a visit of the top classes to the library. The library and its arrangements should be explained to the young people, and they should be given, free of charge, a catalogue of literature for youth.

It is also the duty of the youth's librarian to instruct technical, business and other apprentices' schools in "How to use the library". In Denmark it is considered important that this instruction be given to the largest possible number of youth's schools — and given by the librarian, who describes the arrangement and facilities of a public library and has the students look up answers to questions in reference books (preferably in their field of study). Thus the young are made familiar with the public library in such a way that very few — at least in the towns — grow up without having been in contact with it. In the country the problem is chiefly one of accommodation. The small libraries in the rural districts have no reading or other rooms where young people may spend their leisure hours. Evening school is attended by only one-third of the young people, and they do not have the same chance for library instruction as youth in the towns. Efforts are being made for the provision of better accommodation for school work, and also to solve the problem of room for the parish libraries so that instruction in the use of the library and books can be given in the library. (The rooms of many country libraries are used after hours by study circles, and this should be the rule in every rural library with accommodation.)

During the German occupation there was active co-operation among political, unpolitical and religious youth associations under the guidance of *Dansk Ungdomssamvirke* (Danish Youth Union). The Union's place has since been taken by a Youth Council and by local joint committees, through which the cultural wants of youth are served. In several places, for instance in Esbjerg (40.000 inhabitants), and in Vordingborg (10,000 inhabitants), co-operation has already been started between the library and the local youth committee, with a view to the establishment of study circles, courses and lectures for young people. There is reason to believe that such co-operation will gradually develop in several other Danish municipalities.

CHAPTER VII

A CO-OPERATIVE AGENCY FOR ALL FREE EDUCATION

THE CONTRIBUTION of the library system of a country to popular educational work depends not only on how much money the libraries have at their disposal, and on the librarian's attitude, but also on the form of co-operation. As mentioned above, it will be natural for each library to initiate co-operation with the local agencies for popular education, by inviting representatives of these organizations once a year for discussion of the help which the library can give. But a number of problems can best be solved by collaboration extending to the whole country, for example the publishing of the literature most suitable for use in educational work, publicity, and the problem of securing appropriations. A council of all the educational organizations, including the Library Association, has been formed in Denmark to consider the questions mentioned and others of a similar character. This council has arranged a short university course each year for leaders in educational work, and has thus given the participants an opportunity, not only to get new information in various fields, but also to meet people who work in other branches of adult education, and to compare experiences. The library representatives on the council for popular education not only have to plead the cause of the libraries in the council but also to be the spokesmen for the council to the librarians.

In conclusion : just as the book is, and must be, the foundation of all adult education, so the library must have a central position in this work. Only in this way can the public library become an active social institution and not a mere centre for mass distribution of entertainment. If we are to succeed in establishing a solid and lasting contact between the different educational institutions and the public library, librarians must take the initiative. Each library must have a plan of action for its own district, while the library system as a whole will attend to all the common problems. Only when librarians have a personal knowledge of the different forms of educational work, particularly of study circle work, and only when they have the necessary time for making adequate preparations to help this work, only then can the library become — what it can and should become — an ideal instrument of adult education.

PART II

UNITED KINGDOM

by

EDWARD SYDNEY

Borough Librarian, Leyton

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE EXISTENCE of a free public library, free in the sense that its resources and services are available to all adult citizens without regard to creed, politics or social situation, is in itself an affirmation of the community's belief in the capacity and willingness of the individual citizen to continue purposively to educate himself throughout his life. This affirmation may be only a gesture, as when the library is inadequately supplied with books, badly housed, under-staffed with untrained and under-educated personnel, inefficiently administered and starved of money; and there are many such libraries. Or it may be, as it is in many communities, one of the major fundamental instruments in the continuous education and development of the adult citizen. Though only one of many agencies and influences which instruct, inform and mould men's minds and lives, when at its most effective it is pervasive of all others, for its primary purpose is with books and all allied material which record and make accessible the story of human aspiration and achievement; and it is to books which all intelligent men must turn constantly for information, inspiration and consolation.

The objective of all public library service is to get books used; that is, to get into current circulation and comprehension, in the minds of men, through books, a wider range of ideas of established high quality. The principal medium to this end must be, for librarians, always the books themselves, and the whole body of bibliographical and bibliothecal techniques has been designed for this express purpose — to collect, index and make available local, national and international resources of book and allied material. Unfortunately, books, as vehicles of ideas, by their very physical nature impose limitations on their use as agencies in the popularization of the ideas within their covers. Because many librarians recognize these limitations and refuse to accept them as prohibiting the use of other media and methods which will encourage and persuade people to use books, they have experimented with and exploited a wide variety of stimuli which are usually and loosely described as adult educational activities.

The purpose of this essay is to describe some of the adult educational activities in use in the library services of the United Kingdom. Before doing so, one must try to define "adult education", if the information is to be of value in other countries, which have educational and social patterns, traditions, and institutions different from those of these islands.

"Adult education" is no easy term to define, and I quote, with permission of E. M. Hutchinson, Secretary of the National Institute of Adult Education, his definition used in a recent paper prepared for the International Conference on Adult Education, in Denmark in June 1949. "Adult education is taken to mean those forms of education which are undertaken voluntarily by mature people (in the United Kingdom meaning persons over the age of 18 years) which have as their aim the development, without *direct* regard to the vocational value, of personal abilities and aptitudes and the encouragement of social, moral and intellectual responsibility within the framework of national, local and world citizenship." As used in the United Kingdom the term presupposes a general standard of literacy resulting from compulsory childhood education. This definition emphasizes the essentially British interpretation of "adult education", i. e. a voluntary activity not directly vocational in purpose and based on a common literacy. It excludes a wide range of adult educational training in science, commerce, technology, and the social sciences, the main aim of which is to equip a citizen to perform certain practical functions in the machinery of maintaining himself and the community. The definition also makes clear that adult education is understood not to concern itself with functional efficiency but with social, moral and intellectual responsibilities. What is lacking in the definition is any specific reference to the development and refinement of the senses through an understanding and appreciation of the arts, without which no citizen can be considered a mature and civilized human being. Nevertheless, the definition is helpful in clarifying the British comprehension of the meaning and purpose of adult education, for it is within the limits of this understanding that the libraries of the United Kingdom organize their activities in its support.

"Adult education" has come, in the course of years, to be a descriptive term covering a specific field of educational enterprise, outside of though linked to the organization and administration of formal education; mainly, because the State education service, financed from local and national funds, accepted little or no responsibility, financial, or otherwise, for the development of the kind of activity defined by Mr. Hutchinson. It is broadly, if not completely, true to say the State did not acknowledge any responsibility for non-vocational adult education until the Education Act of 1944. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom has a long tradition in this field, dating back to the rapid growth in the late 18th Century in the number of debating clubs, museums, scientific and naturalists' associations, in the spread of night classes and Sunday Schools, and in the formation of book clubs. This passion for self-improvement among the artisan classes flowered into the Mechanics Institutes. In 1851 it was estimated there were 610 such establishments in England with a membership of over 600,000, that the number of lectures delivered in 1850 was 3,054, and that the number of students attending classes was 16,629. It is significant that the first Public Libraries Act in England was passed in 1850. About this time the success of the Mechanics Institutes and other similar enterprises was noticed by the universities, and in the period 1873 to 1878, Cambridge, London and Oxford adopted the scheme since known as the University Extension Movement, whereby members of their staffs, or others especially appointed for the purpose, went out into the country to lecture to classes of working men and women on subjects chosen by the students themselves, receive written work from them and lead discussions.

* "The influence of the University Extension Lectures was felt most amongst ladies and persons of leisure and middle-class young men; on the other hand, they had great success with the miners of Northumberland and among working men in certain other parts of the country. It was out of the efforts of a small group of working people bent upon using the facilities of university extension to the greatest advantage that in 1903 the Association to Promote the Higher Education of Working Men (later known as the Workers' Educational Association) was formed."

It would be out of place here to describe the many other educational agencies evolved in Great Britain during the progress of the industrial

* Poole : *Growth of Adult Education*. B. C. A. pamphlet No. 46, 1948.

revolution. What is desired is to bring into particular prominence the characteristic propensity of the people of these islands to organize a multitude of associations and institutions for the development, instruction and informing of public opinion in every conceivable subject. It was the success of the University Extension Movement, the W. E. A., the residential colleges, the Co-operative Union, and of other organizations engaged in informal adult education, which finally brought the State into the field, not as a competitor with existing agencies, but in co-operation with them. It is a feature of the exercise of the powers conferred on local education authorities by the Education Act of 1920 that they have chosen to assist existing adult educational organizations rather than themselves to provide non-vocational education for adults.

CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

Since 1920 the development of the British Broadcasting Corporation, with the very high educational content of its programmes; the cinema industry, especially the documentary film; and the public library in England and Wales at long last released from the financial stranglehold of the limited rate and extended to rural areas, have brought new and powerful influences into the informal education of the individual adult. As a result of war-time experiments we now have the Arts Council of Great Britain servicing and sponsoring the development and provision of art exhibitions, music and the drama over the whole country; the Central Film Library lending films freely to all who care to ask; the Bureau of Current Affairs stimulating and servicing discussion groups of all kinds; the Central Council for Industrial Design supplying travelling exhibitions and portfolios of photographs; whilst the pre-war established British Drama League and British Film Institute are being compelled to enlarge their services to meet the ever-increasing demands made on them.

Finally, the Education Act of 1944. Under this Act it is now the "duty of every local education authority to secure the provision for their area of adequate facilities for further education". This is defined by the Act as :

"(*a*) full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age; and

(*b*) *leisure-time occupation in such organized cultural training and*

recreative activities as are suited to their requirements, for any persons over compulsory school age who are able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose."

Each local education authority is committed to the preparation for its own area of a scheme for further education, and is under obligation when preparing the scheme to "have regard to any facilities for further education provided for its area by universities, educational associations and other bodies," and to consult such bodies.

Such is the traditional and contemporary adult educational situation in the United Kingdom. It is hoped this brief sketch fulfils its purpose of stressing the great variety of adult educational work in Great Britain. The social and educational patterns and traditions of our society frustrate, facilitate and condition every aspect of our service. These patterns and traditions have been particularly effective in controlling the activities of public libraries in the field of adult education, and have deeply influenced the philosophical approach of many professional librarians and those controlling libraries to the policy and purpose of public library service.

CHAPTER II

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY : POWERS AND POLICIES

IT WILL BE SEEN from the foregoing that "adult education" in this country means "group" education. On the other hand, the basic purpose of the public library has been to give service to the "individual" citizen, who may or may not be a member of an organized group. It is fundamental to an understanding of our policy towards adult educational activities, within the library, that this distinction be realized, for it has coloured and conditioned our history, legal status, planning, and financial resources. The widening of the policy of libraries to cover a variety of methods of group stimuli is new, though sporadic experiments had been made for many years, but not within the powers given to library authorities by the Libraries Acts. Indeed the Acts, even today, confer no powers on municipal and county library authorities to do other than provide a book and allied material service. Such work as it is the purpose of this essay to describe springs, in the main, from special Acts or powers secured by individual authorities; the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1936, chapter IX, section 51, which gave permission for the payment of lecturers' fees; and the Middlesex County Council Act, 1944, which authorized expenditure on lectures and art exhibitions, and the charging of entrance fees. The limitations of the Libraries Acts have been overcome in part in the past by a considerable number of medium-sized authorities adopting also the Museum and Art Galleries Acts, and combining the functions under one director, the Librarian. Strictly, under such a combination, any activities organized are not the responsibility of the library, though some of them take place in the library or joint premises. In the large city of Sheffield where the Libraries, Art Galleries and Museums are controlled by one Committee (though operated under sub-committees as separate departments with their own officers and staffs), a joint sub-committee of all three with the Education Committee and the respective chief officers has been established, to work out schemes of service co-operation and mutual assistance. This will be referred to later.

The Education Act of 1944 has made it possible for public libraries to require the assistance of the local education authority, if they so

desire, in financing lectures, exhibitions, and the like. So far, little direct use has been made of this facility. In the main it has been used only for payment of lecturers' fees. The London County Council (General Powers) Act of 1947 gives power to the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Borough Councils to provide concert halls, entertainment rooms, reading rooms, pavilions and bandstands, and to provide concerts and entertainments therein, and the Local Government Act, 1948, enables a local authority to provide entertainments and dancing, theatres and concert-halls, to maintain a band or orchestra, and to provide refreshments, programmes and advertising in connexion therewith, subject to the proviso that the net charge to the authority shall not in any year exceed the product of a rate of sixpence in the pound (£).

The official policy of the Library Association towards adult educational activities was based on the almost continuous examination and evaluation of the service which went on between 1914 and the McColvin Report of 1942. It was set out in Paragraph 17, pages 14-15 of the Association's "Proposals for the post-war development of the public library service" issued in 1943, and reads as follows :

"It is the function of the public library to provide books; the adult education it provides will be mainly in the informal study of these books by individual users of the library. For the organizing of formal educational activities the responsibility lies with the education authorities and other agencies. The organization of lectures and other adult educational activities, therefore, is not properly part of the library service, but the provision of books for these purposes should be the responsibility of the public library system. The public library should have a suitable room in which classes and lectures on the use of the library can be held, and which can be used for classes of children and adults for lessons and practice in the use of books. Where these and other existing premises are available they can be placed at the disposal of education authorities. In general, however, the provision of separate and distinct premises for formal adult education and for libraries is desirable. The exception to this rule is that in very small places where neither library nor educational requirements alone would justify or permit of adequate separate premises, joint buildings are recommended, such as village colleges and community centres with class rooms and a separate library room or rooms. Usually, it will be advantageous if library and educational premises, especially in small towns and suburban districts are adjacent. An adequate and efficient public library service is a necessary background to any scheme of adult education."

This was one paragraph only in a programme designed to secure conditions in which the library service could fulfil its primary purpose, a full book service. It tended, in its eagerness to obtain basic necessities, to exclude public libraries from any and every form of informal education and stimulation, before adequate book resources and bibliographical aids, and sufficiently qualified staff capable of expert information service and reader guidance had been provided. Moreover, our experience of the post-war years of the 1920's, and the demands of the war years 1939-43 to the time of the Report, increased our apprehension of the great pressures which a book shortage allied to national schemes of rehabilitation for all ex-Service personnel, and a change-over of industries from war to peace-time production would bring to the service. Here was a great opportunity in front of us; perhaps the greatest opportunity we had been afforded in our ninety and more years, and nothing must be undertaken which would divert time, effort, skill, or accommodation from concentration on our first function, that of book service.

Many factors have influenced the effective participation of libraries in informal adult education, but the major factor at all times has been finance. Freedom to spend whatever the local community desired on its library service is only thirty years old, and the last ten of these have been war-years and aftermath.

This statement of policies and powers would be incomplete without a reminder that the United Kingdom Public Library Service is not legally compulsory but optional, that it is a "local" government service, that it is financed entirely from local funds, and so far is independent of State grants, direction and control.

CHAPTER III

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN ACTION : GENERAL

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY is, and always has been, a centre of local cultural activity. For the individual citizen sailing his own ship under his own power, with a private chart to his own personal haven, there is no comparable service in the country. But it is not my intention to deal herein with the facilities which are provided for the individual citizen, but to those which are directed to *groups* of citizens meeting *within the library;* to those activities by which some librarians attempt to bring the library into propinquity with the living stream of stimulation in the community. This stream is, of course, composed of both groups and individuals, but up to now we have, in general, organized for the individual alone and neglected the group.

Nor does it come within the scope of this essay to describe the book service which the library provides to formal adult educational classes organized by the University Extension Movement and the Workers' Educational Association, no matter where they are held; or, the methods by which information of the value and use of the library is taken to groups of all kinds, wherever they are meeting, temporarily or permanently.

The fundamental purpose of a public library is the service of books and allied materials. No library should be persuaded to indulge in informal education and stimulation until it has provided adequate book resources, bibliographical aids, information service and reader guidance. No side-lines, no matter how attractive, should be developed at the expense of these essential and unspectacular services. Nevertheless, a public library service, operating a continuing programme of interest stimulation, and taking an active part in the presentation of ideas and information of a high cultural and educational standard by means other than books, does attract to it many who would otherwise remain outside. They are awakened to a wider range of interests, with a resultant discrimination and greater satisfaction in the use of books. Also, the gathering together inside the library of groups of citizens interested in particular subjects and prepared to enlarge their knowledge of them, provides many

opportunities for the establishment of those personal relationships between the librarian and the individual citizen which are so difficult in these days of mass demand, large issues and small staffs, and yet are so vital to the successful exploitation of the library's resources.

The library's reputation for impartiality and its known hospitality to all points of view give it a unique position of leadership in the public mind. There is abundant evidence that the exercise of this leadership is entirely to the public satisfaction and raises the status of the service.

It is an interesting aspect of public librarianship that despite official policies, financial limitations, and adjurations to stick to bibliographical and bibliothecal tasks, there have always been a few librarians unable to stay quietly at home waiting on demand, but who have taken an active part in stimulating that demand by gathering together in the library by one means or another, a group or groups of people, and exciting their interest in the ideas and information contained in the volumes on the shelves. Generally such attempts took the form of public lectures, but occasionally an exhibition of local history material, of printing, rare books, etc., would be organized. In nearly every such case the project was dependent on local resources of material and skill in presentation.

During the last thirty years, since the Libraries Act of 1919, attempts to make the library a local centre for informal adult education have taken two main directions :

1. By providing within the library accommodation and equipment to enable local societies to meet therein; and

2. By the library authority itself sponsoring various activities designed to encourage citizens to come to the library for inspiration and to meet others of like interests.

This sponsorship has taken two forms :

a) encouraging the formation of local cultural societies such as arts councils; branches of the Workers' Educational Association and the National Book League; classes of the University Extension Movement; gramophone, antiquarian, literary, film and other societies, which, with help from the library and with representation of it on the committee of management, were expected to control and direct their own affairs. Such bodies might, or might not, meet in the library; but either way, the standing of the library as a stimulating and energizing force was established. The life and destiny of such groups lay in the members and leaders they elected and they lived or died according to their own strength. The final responsibility was not the library's.

b) The library authority taking full responsibility for the organization and maintenance of such activities as discussion groups, play-reading, lectures, gramophone recitals, concerts, film shows, and exhibitions. Such enterprises became possible, because certain national sources of supply of the necessary material and qualified advice have been established, and by co-operation and subscription libraries are now able to obtain advice and assistance not lying within their own resources. These sources of supply are the Arts Council of Great Britain, Central Film Library, the British Film Institute, the Bureau of Current Affairs, the British Drama League, Central Council of Industrial Design, National Book League, and so on.

Libraries were encouraged to extend their policies in this direction by the Board of Education Memorandum N° 242, August 1940; the provisions of the Education Act, 1944; the Ministry of Education's Further Education Grant Regulations, N° 6, 1945, and Circular N° 57, 1945 on Demobilization and Adult Education, without fear of surcharge for illegal expenditure. The Local Government Act, 1948, has finally removed this fear.

CHAPTER IV

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN ACTION : AS A CENTRE OF LOCAL CULTURAL ACTIVITY

A CURSORY STUDY of the planning and service facilities of public libraries built between the two wars discloses many indications of a shift in the service philosophy of library authorities and their officers. The new central libraries at Manchester, Bolton, Sheffield, Rotherham, Huddersfield, Hendon and Watford, to name only a few, and of many branches up and down the country, have been equipped with theatres, lecture halls, meeting rooms, exhibition halls, pianos, film units, lanterns, etc., so that the library could become a centre of local cultural activity — whether such enterprises as were carried on therein were sponsored by the library or by local societies, or by both. Though it is not possible to do much without accommodation and equipment, it is surprising what can be done, if the impulse is there, in the Children's Library or Adult Lending Department, after service hours; or, in the public reading room by closing an hour or so early one or two nights a week.

It is estimated that approximately 150 libraries have lecture halls and/or meeting rooms which are used for adult education or other activities, and that approximately 174 authorities are carrying out or co-operating in some kind of programme in these matters. Such programmes vary enormously in extent and variety from an occasional popular lecture to a very wide range of classes, lectures, discussion groups, play-readings, exhibitions, etc. It must be emphasized that public libraries are never responsible for classes of *instruction* in any subject, though many libraries provide hospitality for such classes organized by other bodies.

It will be useful at this stage to describe briefly the work of three new library services and one revitalized old one, to demonstrate how towns not handicapped by tradition and established policies have responded to the new needs, in each case under the most forbidding difficulties.

DAGENHAM : This borough adopted the Libraries Acts in 1928. It was a new town created out of a great working-class housing estate built by the London County Council in the early 1920's on the north

bank of the Thames, east of London in the county of Essex. Within the boundary lies the Ford Company's motor plant, and many of its residents are employed there. The population is approximately 110,000, and it is served by six branches and a travelling library. The headquarters are housed in a "moated homestead" adjoining the Dagenham Branch, and the service has no central building of the type common to old established services, nor has any branch a meeting room or lecture hall.

The local situation when the library service began was unusual for this was not the normal urban spread from a city centre with consequential extension of existing services, nor was it a "new" town, as that term is now understood. It was a great housing estate out of which the inhabitants had to create an administrative town and inaugurate and develop every conceivable type of social organization. They were not the most promising material for the job for they were the forced over-spill from East London with little knowledge of local government and less experience of that social cohesion of provincial towns in which germinate so many political, social and cultural groupings.

Here was an entirely new and urgent problem for public library service, a problem which required a re-assessment of service fundamentals and a selection of essentials carefully related to local conditions, needs and desires. Here was a chance for establishing leadership *and* partnership in building up a service which had to come wholly out of the pockets of a working-class population, without outside financial aid from any source. The chance was unique — by the people, with the people and for the people. Here surely was an opportunity for experiment, invention, novelty, in librarianship, but more than anything, imagination and courage. That chance was brilliantly taken in many ways especially in leadership in informal adult education and stimulation, and much of what follows is taken from the Librarian's Annual Report, 1947-48.

The library buildings are now the acknowledged meeting places for all kinds of societies and during 1947-48, 1638 meetings were held in them. Where so much had to begin from nothing it is interesting to observe the kind of activity which has gravitated towards the library, or was started by the Librarian and his Staff.

Firstly and naturally there is the Workers' Educational Association, Dagenham Branch, the local Hon. Sec. of which is a member of the Library Staff. This branch held classes in 1947-48 in Current Affairs (12 weeks), International Affairs (12 weeks), Modern Economic Organization (12 weeks), Music Appreciation (18 weeks), and also organized

in the library two Saturday Schools on : (1) This dollar crisis; and, the New National Health Scheme, and (2) Trade Unions, Wages and Stability; and, the Social Aspects of the Film.

There are three flourishing music groups, members of which have loaned gramophone records for each of the meetings. The Library has now started its own library of records.

Two discussion groups have dealt with the following subjects : "The working of local government," "World food problems," "Housing and the Labour Party," "The problems confronting the United Nations," "The playwright Marlowe," "Service to Youth," "Problems and psychology," "Australia today and tomorrow," "Exports and shortages," "Welfare work," "Sport and professionalism," "The history of local government," "The individual and the State," "Palestine today."

A play reading circle has been successfully launched by a volunteer leader, who is now engaged in such work for the London Co-operative Society. Our most flourishing film society owes its films and apparatus also to the same body. Twelve film shows were arranged in 1947 at which British, Danish, American, French, Russian, German, Canadian and Swiss films were shown. The average attendance was seventy-five to eighty. At one show, one hundred and forty-five children were present. A local production unit is making a documentary film of youth activities. Music for the film is being composed locally and premises and facilities are provided by the library.

On July 22nd, 1947, the Dagenham Arts Council was organized, and an Arts Centre is being established. Library premises and staff figure in the organization, hence this brief reference which recalls three events : a performance by the Mask Theatre of Priestley's "The Linden Tree" in the County High School on two nights, an exhibition of Blake's "Illustrations to the Book of Job," and a beautiful little collection of Chinese Wood Cuts.

GUILDFORD : A thousand years of continuous town life have given the Borough of Guildford, Surrey (population 45,000), an air of gracious living and old world charm, but not until 1942 did it have a public library; and this was started as a direct result of the agitation of members of H. M. Forces stationed in or near the town, medical and law students and groups of educated refugees who had sought shelter there from the air raids on London. Although the library was in temporary premises scattered over the town, it was immediately successful. After two years the Library Committee reformed itself

into a Library, Museums and Arts Committee, to administer the library and museum and to encourage music, drama and the arts, under the various powers available to it. In April 1944 it leased a large shop in the centre of the town, had it decorated by a group of art students working under the direction of the Chief Librarian, and began a series of exhibitions in co-operation with C. E. M. A. (now the Arts Council of Great Britain) and other bodies. By June 1948, 58 such exhibitions had been held, of which a considerable number were the result of the stimulus to local societies by the availability of the accommodation and the enterprise and encouragement of the Librarian. A display on the history of the film resulted in the establishment of a local film society, and a W. E. A. class in the "History of the Film." In addition to its exhibitions, Guildford House, as the converted shop was re-named, provides free accommodation for official and voluntary societies sponsoring cultural and educational activities, which include choral and orchestral concerts, educational meetings and conferences, and a local parliament. With a maximum accommodation for 250 people the building is used during the winter months by 25 organizations.

[1]"The evening institutes and the Technical College have been unable to accommodate such bodies as the W. E. A., and the Library Committee has been forced into filling the gap and accepting as an important part of its work such activities as aid in finding speakers, general publicity for informal adult educational activities, liaison between individuals and voluntary bodies, Army education liaison, and provision of accommodation.

[1]"These and many other functions stress the library's importance, not only as a source of reading matter, but as a channel for the spread of information and exchange of ideas over the widest possible field..... Centralisation of education (under the 1944 Act) has left unsolved a tangle of loose ends represented by voluntary and informal work in adult education; work that is essential for the achievement of a democratic citizenship which must have its roots in a full and mature understanding both of civic rights and duties and equally of the arts. Those loose ends can only be knotted firmly into a fabric of good citizenship by skilled local leadership which at present, because of training and contacts, often comes most easily from the librarian." Other experimental work by the Libraries Committee and its officers has resulted in the formation of a professional municipal orchestra, a municipal festival choir, and local repertory theatre sponsored by the

[1] Guildford Public Library. *Annual Report*. 1947-48.

Arts Council. So in less than seven years, and some of them war years, the enthusiasm, imagination and enterprise of a public librarian and her Committee has established in Guildford a vital centre for the arts, which has had the whole-hearted support of local and national voluntary and other organizations, all of whom were interested in creating a real community culture with a boundless interest in the living arts. This is leadership which redounds to the credit and status of librarianship.

SWINDON, WILTSHIRE (population 67,030 est.) is an industrial and market town, the home of the locomotive engineering shops of the Great Western section of British Railways. Until 1942 the only library service was that provided by the Railway Mechanics Institute, but it had long been evident this service was inadequate for the needs of modern Swindon. The Borough Council adopted the Libraries Acts in 1942 and opened a library in a converted store in one of the main streets. This was immediately successful; and, forced by the isolation of the town and the war-time cessation of almost all local cultural and intellectual groupings, the Library Committee and its officers soon found themselves impelled to widen their function and provide both the stimulus and the satisfaction for all kinds of informal adult educational desires and needs. The response to this provision was so strong and continuous that the Borough Council converted a school into a Junior Library and Arts Centre, complete with all necessary equipment, for the use of local societies. During the year 1947-8 these societies held 480 meetings in the Centre. In addition, the Library Committee organized a series of exhibitions and seven concerts, and itself sponsored eight societies — Art Discussion Group, Ballet Club, Film Society and Home Movie Club, Gramophone Society, Historical Society, Playreading Group and Poetry Circle, holding in all 130 meetings. There can be no doubt that the new library service has benefited enormously by this leadership both in status, in opportunities for book service, and in building up powerful local support for its continued development.

ST. PANCRAS, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH, LONDON (population 140.000) is predominantly a "railway borough" since three of the main London Termini are within its boundaries, together with their marshalling yards, administration offices, etc., and as such received concentrated attention from the German bombing programme. In the north there is a middle-class residential area, in the south an extensive business and commercial area, and an industrial district containing a multitude

of small factories of the light industries. Though the Libraries Acts were adopted in 1904, the borough had two libraries only in 1939, and one of these was in temporary premises. The expansion to six service points, to cover the borough, has been largely post-war and very rapid, and the four new points are in converted premises, and provide only adult and children's home reading services and quick reference collections. None of them has meeting rooms, and all informal groups meet in the Children's Library after 7 p.m.

Developing out of war-time experience of Holidays-at-Home, co-operation with the war-time Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts and the Ministry of Information services, the St. Pancras Education and Public Libraries Committee sponsored the establishment of the St. Pancras Arts and Civic Council. This is a citizen organization whose object is to co-ordinate and assist the work of the hundreds of cultural and educational organizations of the Borough. In addition, this Council has its own Groups and Clubs such as the Music Group, Horticultural Society, Ballet Circle, etc. The public libraries assist this work in every possible way — by providing staff to do the administration work (the Borough Librarian is Hon. Gen. Secretary of the Council), by publicity, and by lending equipment, e. g. film projector, lantern, epidiascope, radiogram.

The Arts and Civic Weeks held in 1947 and 1948 were organized entirely by the Public Libraries, on behalf of the Arts and Civic Council. In co-operation with the Council the Libraries Department organizes series of lectures, discussions and film shows, concerts — orchestral and other, drama festival, youth parliament, and jointly in association with the National Book League a "Book Week" comprising an exhibition, lectures, discussions, and a Brains Trust. At the Branch Libraries the Staff encourages the formation of small play-reading and discussion groups and gramophone circles. Wherever possible the publicity material for all these activities contains reading lists and information of the service provided by the Libraries.

The significance of the four short descriptions above lies in the willingness of the library authorities to sponsor and finance this kind of extension of purpose.

As not one of the four library services — Dagenham, Guildford, Swindon and St. Pancras — has specially planned and equipped accommodation within its own library walls it will be helpful to see what does happen where that accommodation and equipment exist as at the Manchester and Sheffield Central Libraries, which have theatres and meetings rooms, with all the necessary accessories.

At Manchester the theatre was in constant use during 1947-48 for

49 out of the 52 weeks, for plays, chamber music, concerts, dancing and films. In addition to a resident drama company, 12 societies and other institutions hired the theatre. Sixteen plays were presented for 446 performances. Manchester is the only library with a resident drama company. The Arts Council presented "Dance theatre" and "Spanish dancers" for one week each, and the Central Office of Information gave 47 lunch-hour commentaries and 12 lunch-hour film shows. Elsewhere in the library 11 exhibitions were held, and the meetings rooms were hired by local societies on 95 occasions.

At Sheffield the theatre was hired 260 times, and amateur societies presented 33 plays; 83 lectures were held and local film societies showed film programmes on 18 occasions. During the period October 1947 to March 1948 inclusive there were only 22 days, excluding Sundays, on which the hall was not booked for some part of the day.

Much the same demand is felt by any library which has suitable accommodation. Time and again, in examining the reports of libraries one finds the same local groups mentioned as constant users: the Workers' Educational Association and the University Extension Movement, Branches of the National Book League, Literary Societies, Art Discussion Groups, Writers' Circles, Dickens Fellowships, and Poetry Readings; Film, Photographic, Historical, Antiquarian, Gramophone, Philatelic, Naturalist, and Planning Societies, Mock Parliaments and Forums, and many others.

The accommodation and equipment is usually made available at charges which just cover the maintenance expenses, or even without charge, for it is recognized that many local societies of the type mentioned exist on small annual subscriptions, and much voluntary assistance from the honorary officers and members. In these cases the library generally requires that no charge for admission shall be made, and may insist that the proceedings be open to the public. Conditions of letting vary and hire charges are generally scaled to meet differing circumstances, especially where the hall may be let to commercial and other users. As local drama societies depend on the sale of admission tickets to meet their expenses, which are necessarily heavy, they must be allowed to charge reasonable fees.

Some library authorities restrict the use of their rooms and halls so as to reserve them for those kinds of local societies which are considered to be most in need of assistance. For example, one library will consider only "Applications from *bona fide* societies or organizations in or associated with the Borough of..... established for the study of history, literature, science, art and kindred subjects for the purpose of lectures or exhibitions of an educational character

or private meetings in connexion with such society or organization, at which no charge shall be made, whether by ticket, programme, or otherwise, and no collection taken," and "Applications from recognised associations of ratepayers for the purpose of ordinary meetings of the associations, at which no charge shall be made, whether by ticket, programme or otherwise, and no collection taken."

CHAPTER V

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN ACTION : AS INSPIRER, SPONSOR AND CO-ORDINATOR OF INFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

It is approximately three and a half years since the war ended, and much less since many public librarians under the age of 50 returned to their libraries from National Service. Because they saw so much common ignorance of the purpose and value of the library service amongst their companions in camp, billets and barracks — or perhaps because they found on their return a society in which the war had closed down almost every local cultural and intellectual grouping — librarians have been most active in inspiring, sponsoring and co-ordinating local efforts to re-establish agencies of informal adult education during these post-war years. Whatever the reason, there is abundant evidence that library authorities and their officers, finding themselves with both the powers and the opportunities, have been quick to take advantage of the situation in a number of ways, and in fields of enterprise not hitherto considered as coming within the function of a library authority.

In the purely bookish field there is record of a number of branches of the National Book League being formed mainly through the efforts of Librarians, for the holding of lectures about and the discussion of books. In addition, and for the same purpose, a number of literary and library clubs and circles have been inaugurated in particular towns. Amongst many may be noted the Malden and Combe Library Circle, Clydebank Library, Literary and Philosophical Society, Fulham Readers Circle, Hornsey Literary Circle, Sutton Coldfield Library Club, Taunton Book Club, and the Clackmannanshire Literary Society. Usually the librarian is the honorary secretary, they meet in the library, and the library committee is represented on the controlling committee. Membership is open to all adult citizens, with or without a small annual fee. The Malden and Combe constitution is interesting as it directly links the Circle with the administration and services of the library, and is an effort to create a "Friends of the Library" group : a rare but very welcome attempt to enlist public support for the service from amongst the users of the library.

The permanent establishment of the war-time "Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts" as the "Arts Council of Great Britain" has induced a number of library authorities to sponsor the creation of local arts councils with the assurance that the advice and service, and the financial guarantee of the Council, will always be available to them. As the Arts Council of Great Britain cannot subsidize municipal authorities, the local arts council has to be a separate association of citizens and representatives of local art, music and drama societies, with, if necessary, representation of the municipal body on the governing committee The war-time experiments at St. Pancras, Swindon and Guildford would not have been possible without the services and advice of the Arts Council. These have been followed by Dudley, where the Netherton Branch Library has been transformed into a delightful and vigorous library, arts and information centre, with a wide range of exhibitions, concerts and plays. The Dudley Arts Club has been founded, and a quarterly Bulletin of Information about the libraries, local drama, ballet, music, opera, films and the visual arts is now established. The amazing public response has been due to the enterprise and energy of the Librarian and his authority. Similar arts councils have been instigated by the Library authorities at Brierley Hill, Hornsey, Dartford, Swinton and Pendlebury, and elsewhere.

It is outside the purpose of this essay to discuss whether public librarians should or should not be employed in these enterprises, but certainly their close association with them in a responsible capacity brings the library service into a continuous and vital relationship with the living forces of enrichment and enlightenment in the local community. A true librarian asks no better opportunity to exploit the library service and its book and information resources.

An interesting variation of the attempt to maintain close contact with local societies has been made at Folkestone, where the Librarian and the Divisional Education Officer made a survey of local societies concerned with science, literature, art, music and hobbies, and invited the leaders of some thirty of them together to form a Local Council of Cultural Societies, with the Librarian as Chairman, and the Education Officer as Secretary. The objects of the Council are :

a) to encourage the work of existing societies, and to stimulate the formation of new societies to fill gaps disclosed by the survey.

b) to assist in housing societies which had no suitable home.

c) to provide apparatus such as lanterns, epidiascopes, film units, etc.

d) to maintain liaison with the Education Authority and the Library Authority.

e) to compile and print a handbook of local societies indicating aims, subscriptions, officers, meetings, etc.

f) to compile and print a complete calendar of meetings of all societies, with dates of lectures, activities, etc., and to avoid, as far as possible, date clashes.

Each society runs its own domestic affairs as before, the Council being merely a co-ordinating body. New societies and activities have been started, including a branch of the Historical Association, and surveys of local history material and local geological formations. Moreover, local enthusiasm and expert skill has directed its attention to a revitalization of the local museum. The library as the home of most of the societies is becoming the accepted centre of wide cultural activity and the library service is gaining both recognition as the generating power of such activity, and increasing its opportunity to give the fullest possible bibliographical and information service. Another experiment in stimulation was tried at Hendon, where a fortnight's exhibition of the work of twenty-four local societies was held at the Central Library in November 1948, and a leaflet published containing the names of the societies, details of their objects, and the names and addresses of their secretaries.

CHAPTER VI

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN ACTION : AS RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZER AND PARTICIPANT

IN THIS CHAPTER an attempt will be made to deal with those activities carried on in the Library with groups of citizens, for which the Librarian and his Staff are solely or mainly responsible, with or without assistance from non-library agencies.

The Librarian knows which citizens are specially interested in various subjects, not only from his knowledge of the associations and societies in his community, but also from his records of book use by individuals. Some libraries maintain an index of readers' interests so that they may inform such readers of new additions of books and periodicals. Others have a mailing list of the most influential and effective persons who are to be advised of all the developments and activities in the library service. The use of these media with the distribution of handbills in the libraries, posters on public buildings and hoardings, and use of the local press will usually ensure a reasonable gathering for almost any activity the authority cares to organize.

It must again be emphasized that much of the work described below has become possible — at a high standard of quality and presentation — because national sources of supply, employing the finest skill, have been organized during recent years, and by payment of small fees, libraries are able to avail themselves of services quite beyond their own, and other, local resources in material and skill.

The first and most important duty of a librarian in these matters is, of course, to persuade people to inform themselves of the value of the library, and the way to use it and to give them instruction in the use of books as tools of everyday life as well as for the special purposes of research and enquiry. Perhaps the best organized system of this type of work is at Sheffield, where a joint sub-committee of the Education and Libraries, Art Galleries and Museums Committees has been working for two years to achieve the maximum co-operation in their work. Much of this endeavour is concerned with the under eighteen years : —

[1]"for the twelfth year in succession a course of instruction in the use of directories and everyday business reference books was given to students of the Central Day Commercial College... A more concentrated use of library facilities, particularly of the Department of Local History, has been freely made by various institutions in the city. Students from the University Department of Education, the City Training College, and the Briercliffe Emergency Training College heard a talk by the Librarian on 'The materials and methods of local history', illustrated by maps, books and manuscripts. The Sheffield Branch of the Historical Association came to study the manuscript collections... At three of the Branch Libraries regular meetings of readers for discussion of library and other topics have been arranged. The Firth Park Branch Library Circle met five times (attendance 134), the Park Branch Library Book Discussion Circle seven times (attendance 147) and the Hillsborough Branch Readers' Circle six times (attendance 128). The discussion was led on five occasions by Librarians, and at other times by readers. For the meetings at the Park Branch a booklist was usually prepared and circulated. In addition to these organized meetings, twenty-nine informal talks on books and reading were given in the Firth Park Lending Library, all but one by the Librarian... Many parties... came to see the Central Library building and to hear something of the work of the various departments. 39 members came from 2 Youth Clubs, 44 from local societies, 14 from the Classical Association, and 10 foreign students in a party organized by the British Council."

Bristol also makes a feature of training courses for students from local commercial colleges, and at Norwich the local branch of the W. E. A. has organized a class in the Reference Library to study the use of local history material. At York, at the request of Hull University College, groups of service men and women awaiting demobilization have visited the Library for instruction in the use of reference books, especially those concerned with business procedures.

For book discussion, apart from contacts with local literary and other societies, the most outstanding projects recently have been Rugby's "Fridays in the Library," a monthly discussion of books; Leyton's "Great Books" series of lectures on famous English classics by well-known authors. This series was in co-operation with the National Book League, who engaged the speakers, and the Essex County Council, who paid the speakers' fees; a number of "Book Weeks" arranged in co-operation with the National Book

[1] City of Sheffield : Education and Libraries, Art Galleries and Museums Joint Sub-Committee. *Second Annual Report*, 1948.

League, and consisting of an exhibition of new or specially selected books, lectures by literary celebrities, literary "brains trusts" and competitions; and exhibitions of British Book Design circulated by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The use of lectures and discussion methods to spread a knowledge of foreign classics and good modern literature, interpreting contemporary conditions in foreign countries, is greatly handicapped by the lack of translations, and by the impossibility, except on rare and fortunate occasions, of securing speakers qualified to explain and discuss them.

Lectures continue to be the favourite method of spreading miscellaneous ideas, and most lecture programmes contain short reading lists on the subjects dealt with. Travel and social subjects are most popular. A curious feature has been the post-war failure of the celebrity lectures in towns where they had been successful before the war. Two interesting uses of the lecture are reported from Glasgow and Leyton. In Glasgow the Libraries and Education Departments are co-operating in providing facilities for the further study of points of special interest suggested by the lecturers. At the conclusion of each lecture an opportunity is given to the members of the audience to enrol in a short study course, which will consist of not more than six meetings, unless an extension is desired. The services of a qualified leader are made available by the Education Department, and the resources of the Libraries placed at the disposal of those joining the Courses. No fees are charged. At Leyton a series of fourteen fortnightly lectures on Music by a professional was run alternately with Gramophone Recitals by members of the public, illustrating the previous week's lecture. Libraries do not usually arrange lectures on economic and political subjects, leaving this to the local branch of the W.E.A., the L.C.C. Education Department or the University Extension Movement. Nevertheless, by offering accommodation, suggesting subjects, advertising the series and collecting audiences it is possible for a library to be instrumental in creating discussion and book use on subjects of contemporary or permanent importance, as for example Leyton's co-operation with the London University Department of Extra-Mural Studies in a series of fourteen lectures on "The Individual in society," and Dagenham's "Current Affairs" course.

No doubt because illustrations were cut to a minimum in the war-time daily press, or because so many good "documentary" and instructional films were produced during the war, people have become accustomed to the visual presentation of ideas and facts by films. Some librarians have realized that good films of the

documentary, instructional and explanatory type can provide just that attractive bridge from an engendered interest, over ignorance, to a firm desire to know and read more about a subject, which has always been the missing link in the world of books. How often has a librarian, faced with a request from a reader for a simple outline of a subject, had to offer either a school textbook or an erudite treatise, knowing that neither was suitable? Moreover, many persons learn the rudiments of subjects quicker through pictures than through verbal images. Hence the recent experiments at Sheffield, Leicester, and Leyton, amongst others, where film programmes were arranged last winter, in co-operation with the Central Film Library.

Each evening's films centred round one theme, such as Canada, Commonwealth and Empire, Industrial Britain, Atomic Physics, Educating the Young, Secrets of Nature, Living Together, Other Lands, Colour and Design in Industry, Transport and communications, Town Planning, Your Garden and Rural Life and Crafts, etc. After one series of films on the "Development of children" at Leyton, the local branch of the Nursery Schools Association led a discussion which aroused so much public interest as to create a demand for a series of film evenings on the same subject with similar leadership in discussion. The lunch-hour film displays in the Manchester Central Library by the Central Office of Information have been mentioned already. The use of the film is probably one of the most effective ways of creating international understanding between common people, but such films must interpret ordinary people, going about the ordinary things of everyday life, to ordinary people in similar circumstances in other countries. Castles in Spain are interesting to the Scottish coal-miner, no doubt, but what he really wants to know, in the cause of international amity and understanding, is how his opposite number in Spain, Pennsylvania and the Ruhr lives and works. Such films, if they are being made at all, are not available through the ordinary trade and other channels, and there would seem to be need of an international exchange centre in each country.

As a result of the British Broadcasting Corporation's series of talks for discussion groups, and their attempts between the wars to popularize listening with subsequent discussion and individual reading, and the success of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs' technique and services during the war, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees have established the Bureau of Current Affairs. This Bureau publishes "Current Affairs," a series of pamphlets each of which is a simple exposition by an accepted authority on some subject of current importance, such as Exports, Family Relations, New Towns, etc. Also

"Background Handbooks," for the more tenacious students, and for leaders of discussions. In addition, the B. C. A. issues a fortnightly wall sheet called "Map Review," which on the front isolates two to four topics for special analysis, selecting them for their topicality and as being suitable for visual treatment, and illustrates them on the reverse with pictorial material and statistical information. The Bureau also organizes schools for the training of leaders in discussion technique and the handling of groups.

So far, no considerable use of this service has been made by libraries, though the Fifeshire County Library experimented with it on a limited scale. The difficulty lies in finding group leaders with sufficient subject training and time to make the necessary preparation for each discussion. That the discussion group method can be made a success under capable leadership is instanced by the group on "Education and Democracy," which ran for five years, 1942-1947, at Leyton, with the assistance of many qualified speakers on educational subjects from Great Britain and the Allied Nations, and frequent use of films. Variations of this technique are to be found in "Friday Forum" at Dumfries, the Mock Parliament (Ealing) and Fulham's "Highlights from Hansard." These latter are a development of the Mock Parliament and are based on readings from "Hansard" by representatives of local political parties followed by debates in which the audience takes part.

Play-reading is a friendly and intimate group activity which can give much pleasure and profit both to those taking part and to spectators. Many county libraries maintain sets of copies for loan to such groups, and other libraries hire them at cheap rates from the British Drama League. The most outstanding group began in January 1936, and except for a couple of short breaks during the heaviest bombing periods has continued its weekly meetings ever since to a total attendance of approximately 27,000. An off-shoot of this group began to produce plays in 1942, and now has some two dozen productions to its credit.

Since the end of the war a number of libraries have instituted collections of gramophone records for loan to the public for use in their homes. One by-product of this has been the organization of gramophone recitals and the encouragement of recorded music societies. In addition to others mentioned earlier in this essay, such recitals are organized at Holborn (lunch-hour), Fulham, Islington, Hornsey, Lambeth and others. The oldest established series began in the summer of 1941 and is now completing its eighth season with its 163rd recital.

Most libraries make a feature of exhibitions of new books, book jackets, books on special subjects and on current events. An interesting experiment was the Stirling Library's exhibition of Unesco posters, diagrams and pamphlets in the public reading room for three weeks in 1946.

That libraries find the services of the Arts Council and its subsidiary the "Art for the People" Scheme extremely useful is evidenced by the exhibitions (520) borrowed by approximately 120 libraries since 1945. The latest development of this service has been the "Picture of the Month" Scheme, whereby a group of libraries is supplied with one picture each, with explanatory information, which they may hold for a month on public display, and then circulate by rota to each other. Guildford has recently inaugurated a lending system of first-class framed reproductions of famous pictures for display in the homes of citizens. In some cases exhibitions are accompanied by guide-lecturers, and frequently at the time of an exhibition a series of lectures, on such subjects as the "Enjoyment of colour, form and pattern in daily life" or "How to look at pictures," will be arranged with the help of the "Art for the People" Scheme. The fullest exploitation of exhibitions takes place at Leyton, and the following is extracted from "Opportunities, 1948-49" the official programme of plays, lectures, discussions, gramophone recitals and exhibitions, organized by that library.

During the winter season five exhibitions were hired from the Arts Council and one from the British Institute of Adult Education, and the hall was let to the Essex Art Club and the Essex Guild of Art Grafts for their Spring exhibitions. The subjects of the exhibitions indicate a widely flung net of appeal : English water-colours and drawings; What is modern painting? Chinese woodcuts; History of Shakespearean production; Five centuries of painting; British book design; paintings of local amateurs and professional artists; and the work of local craftsmen and craftswomen in needlework, pottery, jewellery and woodwork.

These full scale exhibitions, usually of two weeks duration, are supplemented by smaller exhibitions of varying types, such as : a series of six reproductions of famous paintings, changed four times a year. Each picture is accompanied by a short explanatory panel designed to help in understanding and appreciation; regular monthly exhibitions of sets of photographs hired from the Council of Industrial Design covering close on forty different subjects, e. g. English tradition, Lettering on packages, Development of the Bus, Textile designer at work, Danish domestic design, Swedish domestic

design, Streamlining, etc.; a small stand on which the Bureau of Current Affairs maintains an ever-changing exhibition of its latest pictorial and printed material; by small pictorial exhibitions from the same Bureau on such subjects as The Theatre, Symphony Orchestra, Industrial Britain, What about those isms?, Meet your M.P., and so on; and by a frequently changed display of postage stamps by the local Philatelic Society.

To these should be added eight illuminated showcases in the entrance halls containing new books, and ten special small displays in the adult lending library of books on subjects of topical interest, one of which is a continuous exhibition of the latest pamphlet material from government and other sources.

The motive behind this continuous and varied exhibition programme is belief that ideas attractively presented pictorially may lead to book use; that few people read a book because it is a book; that most people read books because the ideas within the covers are of interest to them, and that the impetus to read a book comes from outside the book itself.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

THE FOREGOING PICTURE of the adult education activities in the public libraries of the United Kingdom makes no claim to completeness, but it is hoped it is sufficient to indicate the variety, vitality and importance of the libraries' contribution to the creation of an intellectually alive and culturally progressive local community. As the International Federation of Library Associations has truly said : "The public library can help people to decide what to read and think *about*, without telling them what opinions they should hold or what action they should take."

Because it contains much of the faith and hope and purpose which lie behind all the adult education activities of public libraries, and some record of a most unusual war-time accomplishment, and because it ends on a note which all librarians the world over will approve, this essay terminates with extracts from the introduction to Leyton's "Opportunities : 1948-49".

"The publication of our winter programme of lectures, exhibitions, gramophone recitals, etc., is an event in the library year which all connected therewith greet with some excitement, for each programme is a venture in hope and expression of faith. Hope that a sufficient number of citizens will patronize and appreciate the opportunities provided for their enjoyment, and a faith that out of this enjoyment and interest they will be encouraged to enlarge their knowledge and understanding by reading the books recommended in the programme and others in the stock of the libraries.

"It is from the support which the citizens of the Borough have given the past efforts of my Committee, that we are encouraged to continue and extend the provision of opportunities of a culturai character for your enjoyment. Because I believe you would like to know the extent of past support, I have had the following brief statistics prepared for your information. All figures are to 31 May 1948.

		Attendances
Play-reading Group	322 meetings	23,009
Dramatic Productions		29,270
Discussion Groups	282 meetings	8,583
Gramophone Recitals	151	11,096
Concerts, etc.		9,165
Lectures	35	2,684
Film Shows	31	2,645
Exhibitions	45	70,974
	Total Attendances.	157,426

"We have called this programme 'Opportunities'. Opportunities for what? The answer is personal to each of us, according to our needs and interests. To me the varied activities herein are 'magic casements' to 'man's unconquerable mind,' and I hope they will lead you to those records of his triumphs, troubles and delights which it is the purpose of the library to collect and preserve for your use and enjoyment."

Sharing ideas. — A library discussion group.

Book discussion.

PART THREE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

by
MIRIAM D. TOMPKINS
Associate Professor of Library Service, Columbia University

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT ON ADULT EDUCATION in American public libraries presents typical projects which exemplify current practice. Assembled from various parts of the country, they make up a composite picture which might give the erroneous impression that all libraries in the United States have developed educational services for readers beyond school age. It is true that some large and medium-sized libraries have fairly well-rounded programmes. Still there are hundreds of small libraries with limited resources that must restrict their activities to a bare minimum; though indeed many examples might be cited of librarians who, even under unfavourable conditions, have contrived to contribute effectively to community life.

The term adult education has only come into use during the last twenty-five or thirty years. The concept, however, was inherent in the American public library from its beginning a century ago. The following statement of the library's function, given in the 1852 Report of the newly founded Boston Public Library, might have been written in 1949, so well does it express the point of view of progressive librarians today.

> ...It has been rightly judged that — under political, social, and religious institutions like ours — it is of paramount importance that the means of general information should be so diffused that the largest number of persons should be induced to read and understand questions going down to the very foundations of social order, which are constantly presenting themselves, and which we, as a people, are constantly required to decide, and do decide, either ignorantly or wisely. [1]

As the public library movement spread, some confusion regarding purposes and responsibilities appeared. Three publications of the 1920's, however, had a marked effect in clarifying thought and shaping attitudes. William S. Learned's *American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge* described the type of informal

1. *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston,* July, 1852. Boston, J.-H. Eastburn, City Printer, 1852, p. 15.

educational agency needed by the adult population and introduced the concept of the public library as a "community intelligence centre." The report of the American Library Association, *Libraries and Adult Education*, outlined programmes and methods. Edward L. Thorndike's *Adult Learning* offered scientific evidence that older men and women can acquire new knowledge and skills.

Among the obstacles besetting the path of the adult educator is resistance to learning on the part of some adults. Intellectual effort requires self-discipline; for adults who have had only a few years of schooling reading is a task, particularly as most serious non-fiction is written for experienced readers. Public libraries cannot extend their services in some of the areas where they are most needed because of this discrepancy between books available and the reading abilities of the people themselves. While some progress is being made in the study of "readability" and in the production of simple, easily understandable books, and while the general level of education is rising, it will be many years before this gap between readers and books is bridged.

In many localities few adult educational opportunities are available. Community adult education should be a joint enterprise in which different agencies, set up to serve particular types of need, co-operate to develop a well-balanced programme. The library alone cannot carry the full responsibility, but its unique position as the only non-partisan agency for the free distribution of books to people of all ages, educational levels, national and racial origins, and religious beliefs, gives it exceptional opportunities to identify interests, stir curiosity and rouse a desire for information on subjects and problems important to individuals and to society. A good librarian sees a library as a flexible agency that can be shaped into the patterns most appropriate to its varying clientele, not as an organization but as an organism, not as an institution but as a living, growing force.

CHAPTER II

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY GUIDES ITS READERS

READERS' ADVISORY SERVICES

THE SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS FOLLOWING the founding of the first publicly supported libraries in the United States witnessed their establishment in many parts of the country. The rapid growth of the library movement after 1900 may be attributed, in large measure, to Andrew Carnegie and his generosity in financing the building of hundreds of libraries. His interest in public libraries derived from his faith in education and his belief that free access to books offered the soundest means of diffusing learning among the general population.

But as libraries increased in number and the reading public grew, problems of a more or less technical nature began to absorb the time and attention of librarians. Thoughtful leaders of the profession, realizing that what had originally been an informal, highly personalized service was becoming mechanical and impersonal, sought for remedies. In larger communities branch libraries brought books nearer to people. The open-shelf policy, whereby the library's collection was made immediately accessible to readers, was generally adopted. It became apparent, however, that these measures were not sufficient. Busy desk attendants had little time to talk with borrowers, many of whom were reluctant to discuss their personal problems within hearing of others. If libraries were to function successfully as educational agencies, individualized service was a necessity. Thus, early in the 1920's, readers' advisory services were set up in many libraries.

The following review of personal guidance service in public libraries is presented because it traces the logical development of many current library adult education programmes. Though some procedures described are now water over the dam, they should be noted, for they generated a power that activated American librarianship as a whole.

The role of readers' adviser varied in different libraries. Certain characteristics were, however, common to all. Qualifications for the position called for familiarity with the literature of many subjects,

skill in using sources of information, capacity to understand and work with people of all sorts, and ability to teach. The readers, adviser's desk was made readily accessible, though with some privacy. If the library was large enough, the adviser had a private office, preferably near the circulation and reference desks. Basic equipment included outlines, bibliographies, syllabi, and "first books" in many subjects. Little publicity was usually given to the new service — a sign or two over the desk or office door, some word-of-mouth advertising, a few newspaper stories — but it was obvious from the response in nearly every library that many readers wanted guidance.

At first the advisers applied themselves primarily to making individualized reading courses. In an unhurried interview the applicant outlined his special interests, educational background, accomplishments, and his purpose in reading on the particular subject. On the basis of this information a reading course was prepared. Gradually the use of such lists expanded. Copies were kept on file and supplemented with other lists and all were made available to interested readers. Titles of books included in reading courses were entered on annotated cards and arranged in a subject catalogue for use by the public. Some readers were thus enabled to make their own courses of study. For other readers, advisers found it necessary only to instruct them in the use of the library's resources.

The demand for advisory service soon overtaxed one person's time and knowledge. It was clear that no library could answer all requests. Often readers required help from vocational counsellors, social welfare agencies, health centres, psychologists, or they needed formal class instruction. Advisers met this further challenge by canvassing their communities in order to compile a list of agencies to which readers might be referred. These agencies, in turn, sent more individuals to the library for help. Many organizations asked for small loan collections to be used by staff and clientele. To meet these demands the library often had to strengthen its own resources. Book purchasing plans were affected. Requests came from various organizations for help in planning their programmes. Members of the library staff were in demand as speakers and leaders of discussion groups.

The Small Library

Many factors determine the particular form of guidance service. The size and physical set-up of the library, the type of clientele, the quality of the staff, and the educational resources of the community all have their effect. The very small library with its limited staff,

meagre budget, and few books has many obstacles to surmount. But it has some definite advantages over the large library. Its area of service is more clearly defined. The staff can take part in the life of the community and thus be familiar at first hand with its needs and possibilities. Relationships between reader and librarian are easier and more natural. Friendliness, intelligent interest in people, and readiness to use every resource available can compensate for deficiencies in other respects. Here is a typical case of a librarian, newly appointed in a small industrial city.

The library was shabby, the books were old and worn, the borrowers few. There were three assistants. None had ever worked in another library and existing conditions seemed inevitable. The new librarian was determined to make the library a force in the community. As one means of achieving this she decided to offer readers' advisory service. Her first step was to change the library into a pleasant, inviting, place. By skilfully managing her slender budget and using volunteer help, she was able to have walls repainted in light, harmonious colours, to build new and convenient bookshelves, and install a few comfortable chairs. Then the book collection had to be reorganized — old and little used books were discarded and new books in bright, cellophane-covered jackets took their places as rapidly as funds permitted. Her staff assisted her enthusiastically and under her leadership developed a new concept of library service.

A big question had to be answered, however, before she could launch her reader guidance programme : Where would she find the time ? She scrutinized her daily schedules and ruthlessly eliminated the least essential of her tasks. Many routine procedures were simplified. By various means she was able to salvage six hours a week for the new project.

From then on she devoted three evenings a week to personal consultations with readers. A sign — "Readers' Bureau — Let Us Help You Plan Your Reading" — announced the new service. The public's response surpassed her expectations; there had been no way of anticipating the number and variety of reading interests waiting to be satisfied. Resources were taxed to the limit. New materials were purchased, books were borrowed from other libraries, and the book stock of the State Library tapped to meet special needs. Clubs sought her help in planning their programmes. The Parent-Teacher Association requested reading lists and a collection of books on child care. Churches found the library a valuable source of reading materials for their missionary societies. People who had never used the library turned to it for suggestions and guidance. Within a

relatively short time the library quietly assumed a position of leadership in its community.

The Large City Library

Far different are the problems of library systems in big cities. Here the greater number and variety of books and the larger staffs are offset by impersonality. The question these libraries must answer is : how to break down barriers and achieve informality and intimacy with the reading public? The organization developed by an eastern city suggests one method of resolving this difficulty.

In the central building of this library system, books are grouped in subject Divisions — Literature, Music, Sociology, Technology, etc. Each Division has a Head, who serves as readers' adviser in his special field. Over these Division Heads is a Chief of Advisory Services, who supervises the work of the advisory corps, directs in-service training of junior staff members, arranges for frequent inter-divisional conferences, and helps readers whose interests cut across subject lines. Some of the larger branches have their own readers' advisers, whose work is supervised and co-ordinated by this same Chief. A Consultant in Adult Education, who is an experienced readers' adviser, is the library's field representative. She makes all outside contacts and directs the library's services to community groups and organizations.

State-wide Reader Guidance

Nearly all the states maintain extension agencies to supply books to those without direct access to local libraries. Several of them have developed guidance services that are similar, in some respects, to the correspondence courses offered by colleges and universities. The Library Agency of a large western state has had notable success in this field. The service is advertised in local newspapers and farm journals. Any resident of the state wanting reading guidance has only to write to the Agency's headquarters. A form is sent him on which he states his particular interests, his objectives, and his educational background. A member of the Agency's staff then outlines his reading programme and mails it to him with the first book on the list. The reader sets his own pace and as he is ready for them the books are mailed to him one by one. His only expense is the cost of return postage. This service has grown increasingly popular. People in small villages or on farms have studied philosophy, read all Shakespeare's plays, become amateur astronomers, learned ways of making their homes attractive, of caring better for their children, and of developing interesting

church programmes. The effects of this long distance guidance have been considerable.

Because of over-emphasis, during the experimental stage, on the separateness of the readers' adviser's work, the idea developed that it was a special service. The guidance function is now, however, generally recognized as a responsibility of the entire professional staff. As stated in a recent bulletin:

> The phrase (readers' advisory service) can and should apply to every library. It indicates a general readiness to help anyone who wants to read purposefully whether his goal can be achieved in the reading of one or a dozen books or pamphlets or magazine articles. [1]

As attention centres more and more on readers and their needs, the trend is to unify all work with the public in a department of readers' services; but administrative practices vary greatly.

STIMULATING LATENT INTERESTS

Many persons find little pleasure or practical value in books. The newspaper, the popular magazine, and a few mystery and adventure stories absorb the little time they give to reading. Making the public conscious of the library as a wide-awake, forward-looking, institution is the first step in reaching many readers. But to discover subjects in which they have a genuine, albeit latent interest, requires imagination and ingenuity.

Exhibits Help

The book exhibit is one of the more obvious devices for inviting reading. A few books on subjects of current interest or lasting value are conspicuously displayed in the library, in outdoor exhibit cases, in store windows fronting on busy streets, and at the roadside in rural areas.

Experience has taught librarians that a small book display, presenting a unified theme, draws readers more readily than many books on various subjects. Books should be the focal point, though pictures, magazine articles and well-mounted newspaper clippings may add to the effectiveness of the whole. Bizarre and fantastic arrangements

1. Wisconsin Free Library Commission. Joint Extension Committee. *The Wisconsin Wide Idea for Voluntary Education through Reading.* Madison, Wisconsin, The Commission (1948).

should be avoided. Book jackets (dust covers) can be arranged on bulletin boards but require careful selection for accuracy in revealing book content. Colour and design alone should not determine choice, for the items featured may be misleading and result in the wrong kind of "salesmanship".

A notable feature of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore is its twelve show windows at street level in which each week new carefully planned and artistically arranged exhibits appear. Books, authors, local celebrities, current affairs, city and state history furnish themes in endless variety. So interested is the public in these displays that a stream of loans and gifts, to be used in exhibits, flows into the library. And people walk blocks out of their way to see "what is new in the library's windows".

Popular Reading Rooms

A special room with a limited collection of attractive, readable books on many subjects is a boon to casual readers easily discouraged at the sight of too extensive an array of reading materials. Librarians are beginning to realize the desirability of offering the occasional visitor a sampling from the total collection. Arrangement of books by subject interests, bringing together materials sometimes widely separated by classification numbers, often lures readers into fields they would otherwise never think of exploring.

Special features of the popular reading room that make visitors feel at home are adequate lighting, interesting wall pictures, bookcases of convenient height (preferably with lower shelves sloping out), a simple card catalogue, annotated if possible, a few tables on which are displayed attractive books and magazines, comfortable chairs, and ash-trays for the smokers. At one end of the room there may be phonograph records, turn-tables and ear-phones.

In libraries where a special room cannot be set apart as a popular reading centre, conveniently located alcoves or a few separate shelves may be used. They should be conspicuous and readily accessible. Collections should be frequently changed and kept fresh and inviting. Floor attendants, released from other duties, who have developed a sixth sense that tells them when to offer help and when to let the reader browse at his own will, can do a great deal to guide persons who hesitate to ask for help.

And Book Lists

Well-set up printed or mimeographed book lists are readily available in most libraries. Coloured paper and appropriate line pictures

skeched on the covers or along the margins add to the attractiveness of such lists. Wise librarians include only a limited number of books, to avoid overwhelming prospective readers with too many choices. Brief descriptive notes, suggesting content and style of titles given, help readers to select books suited to their tastes.

The "Reading with a Purpose" booklets, a series of sixty or more reading courses prepared by specialists and published by the American Library Association some years ago, were very popular for a time. Each number of the series consists of a short essay followed by a reading list. Most of the booklets are now out of print, but they served a useful purpose and should be revised and reissued. Libraries sometimes distribute lists published by other agencies — the Foreign Policy Association, the League of Women Voters, the Cancer Society, the Heart Association, the National Conference on Christians and Jews, etc.

The Cleveland Public Library some years ago established a precedent, now followed by other libraries. In co-operation with local motion picture theatres, which carry the cost of printing, it prepares short lists of books related to current pictures. The lists are printed s "bookmarks" and inserted in books circulated at the library, and are also distributed by the theatres to their patrons. Thus the library publicizes worth-while pictures and the theatres, in turn, advertise the library.

The "Library Column," made up of book lists and reviews, is a regular feature of many newspapers. But librarians have learned that library events have a human interest value that attract readers who pass over a column of authors and titles.

Readers on the Run

For busy people employed in down town offices, some libraries schedule brief talks, film showings, or concerts of recorded music. "Meet the Experts" was the title of a successful series of noonday talks held in the central building of a library on the west coast. Programmes were provided by local and regional artists and writers, who discussed their own works and subjects. In an eastern library "Noon-Hour Talks" on current problems, community affairs, psychology, personal health, etc., have been given for the past six years. The meetings, held in a section of the main corridor easily accessible from the street, are so informal that people can come and leave as they will. A shelf of books on the topic of the day, near the entrance, enables the person with little time to select his reading quickly. Film showings, such as "Great Musicians and their Music,"

featuring artists such as Myra Hess and José Iturbi, and brief reviews of important books of the moment, given by members of the staff, are offered at the noon hour by another library.

IMPROVING READING SKILLS

Two very real barriers to education through reading challenge the librarian. One is the scarcity of simply written materials and the other the inefficient reading habits of many adults. Films and other audio-visual aids offer partial remedies. But skilful reading is a *sine qua non* of genuine education, and the development of sound reading habits a prime function of the library. An adequate supply of simple, easily comprehensible books on important subjects would help to solve the problem, but deficiencies in reading skill must be removed. Until they are, the library's most effective services will be beyond the reach of many adults.

Persons unskilled in the mechanics of reading are not the only ones cut off from the world of books. Slow, cumbersome methods of reading, limited vocabularies, and poor concentration make reading an uncongenial task to many people of all ages, abilities, and levels of education. Disabilities may be caused by limited schooling, poor teaching, bad environment, immaturity, and many other factors. Whatever the reasons, there are large segments of the population for whom training in the art of reading is a first educational necessity.

Some contend that this is a responsibility of the schools, but many retarded readers are beyond school age and adult schools offering remedial courses for adults are relatively few. Moreover, some adults who have a distaste for anything that suggests the classroom will turn with greater ease to the library with its informal atmosphere and ready adaptability to individual needs. Readers' advisers are experienced in working with retarded readers. They know that reading habits can be improved even at the adult level, and most of them keep abreast of progress in the field of reading studies. In recent years library schools have included courses dealing with the reading process as a required part of their curricula. A profession that specializes in education through reading should be informed on the causes of reading disabilities, know the standard diagnostic tests, and be capable of prescribing first-aid remedies.

Several libraries have organized classes designed to improve reading skill. The Public Library in Washington, D. C., assisted by a reading

specialist, held a clinic, open not only to readers, but to staff members, to study diagnostic and remedial reading procedures at first hand. The Detroit Public Library conducted a reading clinic in the auditorium of its main building which was attended by nearly one hundred and fifty persons with varying backgrounds and abilities. All were given a series of reading tests by the Supervisor of Reading in the Public Schools. The group was then divided into small sections. Throughout the course the library staff worked with the Supervisor, following the progress of the students, and prescribing reading materials.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, assisted by a group of college instructors, conducted a more advanced course that included training not only in reading skills but in reading appreciation and in methods of study. The Adult Reading Clinic, offered jointly by the New York Public Library and the College of the City of New York in their "Lifelong Education" programme, is very popular. The courses are planned to give students intensive training in rapid and accurate reading, and to improve their vocabularies, discrimination, and cultural backgrounds.

A survey of public libraries throughout the country would undoubtedly reveal similar courses in other places. Even in small communities, lacking the facilities of large cities, libraries purchase the excellent self-help books on reading skill which are now available, and help readers to use them. Some libraries provide standardized tests. They seek assistance for adults from public schools that have reading clinics. It has been the librarian, in some instances, who has focused attention on the needs of retarded readers and helped to obtain special classes in reading for adults.

CHAPTER III

NEW TOOLS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

For years those librarians who regard the public library as a center of popular education for the entire community have been trying to establish contacts with the large number of people who do not use their libraries. Experience has shown, however, that there are many for whom print is not the best means of communicating ideas. For such people the rich assortment of non-book materials — recordings, radio transcriptions, motion pictures and television, etc. — seem to offer a partial solution to the problem. At the start librarians used them as lures to reading and were discouraged when circulation records failed to show immediate results. Today, however, these new media are recognized as valuable educational tools in their own right. This point of view is well stated by the Chairman of the American Library Association Audio-Visual Board :

> Audio-visual materials can never take the place of books, of course. They should not be thought of as devices for building up the circulation of books. They are useful in themselves, but not for stimulating much more reading of books. Neither should they be used merely to divert with sound and motion. Wisely used they can enrich the library's book services by supplementing them. They can take information and ideas to large numbers of people whom books are not reaching. By increasing the volume and intensity of the library's services they can multiply its community contacts and increase its effectiveness. [1]

Constructive use of audio-visual materials requires clear understanding of the effects they produce. Many of the more popular are designed for mass consumption. They cater to popular tastes, and sometimes present fallacious ideas evoking emotional responses that foster existing prejudices. It is therefore a responsibility of the adult educator to develop ability to discriminate between the true and the false, the shoddy and the sincere. Moreover, genuine

1. Rothrock, Mary U. Wings of Thought. *Library Journal* 74 : 458, March 15, 1948.

education demands mental activity, and films, radio, and recordings represent a one-way type of communication that may be passively received. If libraries are to use audio-visual materials effectively, audiences must be encouraged to react to the ideas presented.

Recordings

Phonograph records have won a recognized place even in libraries that hesitate to add films to their collections. The cultural value of the many fine recordings available is obvious.

Practices in handling phonograph records vary. Some permit them to be used only under supervision within the building. Multiple turn-tables and ear-phones enable a number of persons to enjoy their individual selections at the same time. Others provide not only listening equipment but circulate phonograph records as they do books.

Nearly all libraries with record collections use them in their own adult education programmes. Concerts featuring a particular artist, the works of a composer, or a group of compositions exemplifying a period or musical form, are often a regular part of the library's scheduled offerings. Talks by staff members or local musicians may precede the playing of the records. Relevant books are on hand and speakers usually make a point of mentioning specific titles in the course of discussion. One library uses an amplifier to carry its music programmes to workers who gather in a nearby park during the lunch hour. The park benches are always filled and people may be seen crowding the surrounding walls, sitting on the grass, or even standing throughout the concert. The programmes are varied — classical, modern, semi-classical, folk-songs, and "old familiar" music are all represented from time to time.

Language teaching records are increasingly popular and many libraries own and circulate them. Those most in demand — Spanish, French, Russian, and German — are usually supplemented by collections of foreign language books. For people from other countries, eager to perfect their knowledge of "American English," there are diction records, skilfully prepared by experienced teachers. Recordings of drama, poetry, and great works of prose are gaining in popularity. At the present time, "I Can Hear It Now," the well-organized sequence of notable speeches from 1933 to 1945, is in great demand. Libraries are finding that it is recreating interest in some of the important books dealing with domestic and international affairs of that period. A few libraries have begun to use wire or tape to make recordings of important broadcasts, local events, and

their own programmes. Recordings of discussion groups in action are proving valuable tools in training for group leadership.

Motion Pictures

Ten years ago only two public libraries in the United States owned collections of 16 mm. films. Today there are more than sixty and the number grows steadily. Some librarians still refuse to admit that film distribution is within the legitimate province of the library. Others, because of budgetary limitations, cannot consider adding new types of materials and the services they entail. But it is probably correct to state that American librarians, in general, are becoming increasingly film-minded, as they realize the potentialities of documentary and educational motion pictures for spreading information on vital problems, stirring interests, and promoting inter-group understanding.

Some libraries that cannot afford to buy films maintain information and guidance service to facilitate their use. A well-stocked file of film catalogues, periodicals, and discussion guides enables the staff to assist patrons in selecting pictures appropriate to their needs. In a few cases libraries undertake to secure films for their borrowers direct from distributors, thus removing an obstacle that often stands in the way of would-be users. All these services, though they fall short of making films immediately accessible, are important in themselves : they also provide experience of practical value when a library begins to develop its own motion picture collection.

It would not be desirable, even if it were possible, for the hundreds of small libraries in the country to acquire film collections. At the present time two experiments, made possible by foundation grants, are demonstrating the feasibility of pooling film resources and services and distributing them on a regional basis. In a large rural state films, together with projectors and operators, travel from community to community in bookmobiles. The highly urbanized section of another state is being similarly served by a library that has had several years' experience in handling films. Recent reports indicate both experiments to be highly successful.

A library's films are usually made freely accessible to the public on terms similar to those for books. A few libraries charge a nominal fee for this service. Some libraries require that films be shown only within the building, others restrict use to organized groups, but many follow the more liberal policy of lending films to individuals as well as to community agencies. Integration with the services of all departments — art, humanities, technology, children's and young

Exhibition in a public library.

Record concert.

people's, and above all, the adult education division — is considered an important requisite of successful film programmes.

The succeeding sections of this report make frequent mention of films in connexion with many projects — those for discussion groups, parents, labour unions, young people's organizations, church societies, and rural communities. In addition, libraries help other agencies to develop their own programmes by advising on the choice of films and by providing opportunities for pre-viewing. Film showings at hours convenient for busy people are weekly, sometimes daily, events in a few of the larger libraries.

The Radio

American librarians make active use of the radio in their educational programmes. A few years ago the "listening group" was a popular method of inducing people to meet together to hear broadcasts about important subjects and then, when the programmes ended, carry on the discussions among themselves. But radio operates on fixed schedules and many programmes suitable for adult education come at hours inconvenient for group meetings. Some libraries are, therefore, building collections of radio recordings and transcriptions for use with discussion groups and music appreciation classes. Alert librarians follow radio programmes closely, publicize those of educational value, subscribe to bulletins that print radio discussions, and prepare exhibits and book lists that tie in with broadcasts.

But librarians are also broadcasters. The weekly programmes of a number of libraries have proved to be sufficiently interesting to stations and listeners to be continued year after year : an example is "Everyman's Treasure House." There are book reviews, talks on the various library services, and a monthly quiz session, when a panel of librarians undertakes to answer questions about books and authors sent in by listeners. The staff of a county library has broadcast "Book Caravans" every Saturday morning since 1938. "Poets are People" was the title given to a series of broadcasts by the library in a large metropolitan centre : each week a librarian interviewed an outstanding poet — William Rose Benet, Padraic Colum, and Langston Hughes, among others. This same library's "Folk-songs for the Seven Million," presented with records and "live" singers, received a national citation as the best cultural programme of its year. "The Young Book Reviewers," a radio programme devoted to books for young people, uses a panel of boys and girls, who comment spontaneously in answer to questions asked by the librarian and visiting authors and editors.

Though the total number of library broadcasts is relatively small, it is growing. Every radio station in the country allots part of its daily time to "public interest programmes," chiefly informational and educational. When a library demonstrates its ability to put on live programmes that attract listeners, it can usually find opportunities to broadcast. When it cannot obtain free time (and almost no library has money to spend on broadcasting) it is sometimes possible to participate in programmes sponsored by others — department stores, business organizations, educational associations, etc. But successful broadcasting demands both skill and time. Careful planning, the ability to visualize a varied audience, and to catch and hold its interests are prime requisites.

Television

Little can be said at the present time about the contributions television may make to library adult education. The educational services of telecast programmes lies in the future. Libraries are, however, purchasing television sets, looking forward to the day when more educational programmes will be available. In the meantime, a southern library, which has two large sets in its main building and a small one in each of its branches, is demonstrating what co-operation between a library and a television station can accomplish. The station uses the library's television audiences as critics of its programmes. As a result the station has featured "Great Books" discussion groups, forums, and lectures on serious subjects. It has also allowed the library to co-ordinate television programmes with educational films.

Other Audio-Visual Materials

A complete account of audio-visual materials used by libraries in their adult education work would include a large number of miscellaneous items, such as maps and globes, charts and graphs, photographs, reproductions of paintings, etc. These are all needed from time to time by classes, discussion groups, and individual readers.

CHAPTER IV

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVES COMMUNITY GROUPS

CHAPTER II, *The Public Library Guides its Readers*, attempted to point out the close connexion between advisory services within the library and an expanding programme of community activities. As one librarian has said, "Most of the really important educational. work of our library originates outside its walls." Nevertheless, successful achievements in adult education depend on the library's ability to develop general awareness of its functions and resources and to create demand for its services. Librarians must not only have an over-all knowledge of their communities but be able to identify the various organizations and groups the library is qualified to help. A first requirement is time to participate in their educational programmes, for only from first hand contacts can the librarian determine particular needs or decide on ways and means of advancing them. The work of the field representative has already been referred to, but few libraries can afford to employ an extra person for this purpose. Schedules can, however, be arranged to allow time for the librarian or a member of the staff to make outside contacts. It is important that every member of the staff be fully informed of the library's community projects and contribute to their development; this is made possible through staff meetings where plans are talked over and everyone makes suggestions. No library can accomplish all the things that need to be done. A choice has always to be made, and most live programmes include plans for the immediate present and those to be carried out as time and resources permit.

The following pages describe some of the community group services of American public libraries. They have been selected because of their importance and because they are types that exist in nearly every community. The pattern of a library's service is shaped by local conditions; consequently there is great variation in the group services given by individual libraries.

Library service to parents is a natural outgrowth of service to children. For more than sixty years now children's librarians have been crusading in the cause of children's reading. In their effort to teach mothers how to instil a love of reading in their children, librarians go out into their communities to talk to women's clubs, associations of parents and teachers, and church groups. Discussions of children's literature inevitably lead to requests for books on such topics as child care, health, psychology, nutrition, behaviour problems, and character training. Questions relating to sex, marriage, home-making, the housing situation, gardening, consumers' problems, the family budget, and a dozen other subjects follow naturally. To satisfy these needs the library begins to build up special collections of materials — books, pamphlets, magazines, and, in recent years, films and other audio-visual materials. These may be placed either in a section of the children's department or in adult reading rooms. When space permits, libraries establish a separate "Parents Room" or a "Family Life Department."

Nine years ago the Public Library in a small New England city organized a "Family Room". Originally named "Parents Rooms", the new name was adopted to describe more accurately the broadening scope of services offered. Special reading lists, prepared by two college professors, give basic guidance to users of the department. Other lists are sent at regular intervals to various churches for publication in weekly calendars. The local newspapers give space to articles, reading courses, and study outlines dealing with topics of concern to families in the community. Parents who do not come to the library are also reached through the Visiting Nurses Association and at the community "Baby Clinic." Special programmes are planned from time to time for clubs and study groups and the library organizes new groups, as the need for them becomes apparent. A file of agencies offering services to parents enables the library staff to refer patrons to proper sources of information. "Education for Family Living" was the theme of an institute [1] held recently by the library under the auspices of the churches. So successful were the various sessions that other institutes will be held. At a weekly "Family Night" educational films of interest to both parents and young people are used to stimulate thinking and start discussions.

1. A short instructional programme set up for a special group interested in some specialized type of activity. (American College Dictionary.)

The Chicago Public Library is one of the large library systems active in its work with parents and family groups. Its services range from the preparation of reading lists and comprehensive programmes for study groups to actual instruction of classes organized by the library. Each year a "Mothers Study Class" meets weekly for a six weeks' course in children's literature planned by the Director of Children's Work. More than 10,000 parents, representing all economic and educational levels, have taken the course in the past fifteen years, and it has been used extensively by libraries in other parts of the country.

An "Institute on Marriage and Family Life," held annually from 1942 to 1945 under the joint sponsorship of the Detroit Public Library, the Detroit Public Schools, the University of Michigan Extension Service, and more than fifty other community agencies, suggests what an alert and intelligent library staff can achieve in a large community. Four daily sessions, from Monday to Friday, provided programmes for mothers of pre-school and school children, for young people, for professional counsellors, such as social workers, clergymen, doctors, and teachers, for young married couples and for the young unmarried. Well-known authorities addressed the general meetings and led small discussion groups and seminars. Co-operating community agencies exhibited services that contribute to family life, appropriate motion pictures were shown during the noon-hour, and books, pamphlets, periodicals, and reading lists dealing with topics discussed were available. A Children's Care Centre and Story Hour entertained the young children of parents attending the sessions. During the week the sponsoring agencies made every effort to establish contacts that would be continued throughout the year.

State-wide programmes have been developed in areas that are not well served by local public libraries. In Wisconsin the State library agency assists local Parents and Teachers Associations and other study groups in planning their programmes, and lends them the reading materials required. Reading courses are prepared for individual parents who cannot attend group meetings, and the books are mailed to them in the proper sequence. The state library agency in Illinois works with the Illinois Home Bureau Foundation and the Home Economics Extension Service of the State University. Fourteen reading courses, revised each year, are available for the women of rural Illinois. Among subjects included are : clothing and textiles, the family and social relationships, the house and its surroundings, rural electrification, music in the home, art related to the home and to personal living, home care of the sick, and first

aid. Certificates are issued by the State Library to women who complete a required number of books and write a brief report on each. During the past seven years 7,000 books have been read and nearly 1,000 certificates awarded.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES HELP YOUNG ADULTS

It is sometimes said that public libraries would not have the task of inducing men and women to read if the schools did their work properly. But even in communities with good school libraries — where teachers and librarians work together to try to develop in the students a love of reading and a sense of the value of books — too often young people, once they leave school, read nothing but sensational newspapers and comic magazines. To help to remedy this, some libraries have a "Young People's Alcove" or department where attractive books of all kinds are readily accessible and librarians with intelligent understanding of youth are in readiness to help readers choose books keyed to their interests. But helping persons already interested in worthwhile reading is a relatively simple task. Stimulating a desire to read and awakening latent ambitions is much more difficult. Unless librarians go outside the library to meet young people wherever they are, books will never be important to thousands who do not come to the library of their own accord.

What do young people most desire? They want jobs and careers. They are looking forward to marriage, to having families, to establishing homes. They want to get along with other people, to understand themselves, to have a sense of personal security in the world of adults. They want health and recreation. They have hobbies. They like music. Some of them are interested in social and political problems. These are interests that libraries can help to satisfy if they can reach young people in time.

The foundations for successful library service to out-of-school youth should be laid before they leave school, and in many communities there is lively co-operation between the schools and the library. The public library assists students in getting materials needed in their courses and guides them in their voluntary reading. The schools, in their turn, encourage students to become library readers; in many places they distribute to all students who are about to graduate invitations from the public library and cards of introduction to a member of its staff. Large library systems include the names and addresses of branch libraries.

Students who leave school to go to work before the legal age (which is sixteen or eighteen in most states) must secure work permits from the school officials. Special reminders to use the public library are often issued with these permits. When the young adult secures employment, the school sends to the library the name and address of the employer and, if the young worker is not already a library borrower, the librarian writes to him again, offering to help him with any new problems that may have arisen.

Most young people are vitally interested in choosing suitable occupations. While the library is not prepared to give vocational guidance, it can, through its file of directories, refer enquirers to qualified counsellors, vocational training agencies, and employment centers. It has collections of books and other materials on occupations of all sorts, which can be borrowed. A few years ago the public library in an industrial community experimented with using the part-time services of a high school vocational counsellor. Every day in the late afternoon or evening she was available for interviews in an office of the public library. The experiment was most successful, but library funds did not permit its continuance. It suggests, however, a kind of service that might well be offered by many libraries.

The library does not attempt to compete with existing groups but to co-operate with them. Initiative for the original contact is, however, frequently the responsibility of the librarian. Community centres, churches, and welfare agencies of all sorts offer opportunities for librarians to meet young people informally and to learn at first hand the things that interest them. From time to time a librarian is asked to assume leadership of groups. This is what happened recently in Baltimore when the Young People's librarian accepted sponsorship of a United Nations Youth Group. Its members responded with enthusiasm to the programmes the librarian helped to plan. Books, pamphlets, and films were used to start discussions which were provocative and lively. With the financial assistance of a local men's club eighteen members of the Youth Group were sent to the New York Herald Tribune Forum, an important conference held annually to consider crucial national and international affairs. The young delegates were given opportunities to meet some of the notable speakers and to participate in discussions.

"Roads to World Understanding" is the title of a series of educational programmes for young people in Cleveland, sponsored jointly by the Public Library, the Junior Council on World Affairs, the Art Museum, and the Cleveland Press World Friends' Club. The meetings are held monthly in the Public Library. Audiences

average 450 young people who come from all parts of Greater Cleveland. "The programmes are planned to develop better world citizenship and greater understanding of the problems of living together in 'One World.' " The human approach is emphasized. Informal talks, motion pictures, panel discussions, interviews, demonstrations of national music and dances are some of the techniques used. Exhibits of books, arts, and crafts representative of other countries are arranged in the Public Library with materials lent by the Art Museum and interested citizens from other countries. The public and parochial schools of the city co-operate and interests aroused by the programmes are promoted in classrooms.

An interesting example of what a public library can do for the many small groups of boys who drift aimlessly about city streets and often run into serious trouble is indicated by the experience of a Brooklyn librarian. Her friendly advance to one such group which she encountered in her neighbourhood encouraged six of them to appeal to her to let them meet in a library club room. As their chief interest was in sports, not books, the librarian was appalled at the idea. When they promised to observe library rules and to create as little disturbance as possible, she agreed to take them in on trial. Week by week the group took on new members until it taxed the small room's capacity.

Another neighbourhood organization offered them larger accommodations, but the boys, suspicious of adult authority, refused to go. When the war came and the older members were drafted into the services, the younger boys continued to meet regularly, and as the early leaders were discharged from the armed services they came back, one by one. Today the club has a membership of 1500, too many to meet in the library, but its building fund is growing and it hopes soon to have its own quarters. Many boys have probably turned from anti-social influences toward constructive interests through their membership in this club — which would never have happened, had the librarian found no place for them in the library. "This group," writes the librarian, "became our most vital community contact. Through these boys, many of whom we came to know as real friends, we learned far more about the neighbourhood, its assets and problems, its way of life and how the library might contribute to it, than ever we could have done through any scheme of our own conscious devising [1]".

1. Scoggin, Margaret C. The Library as a Center for Young People in the Community Youth, Communication and Libraries : Papers presented before the Library Institute at the University of Chicago; edited by Frances Henne, Alice Brooks, Ruth Ersted. Chicago, American Library Associations, 1949, p. 160.

More than 11,000,000 men and women in the United States have passed their sixty-fifth birthdays. In another thirty years there will probably be twice that number. Not only will there be more older people, but they will constitute a larger proportion of the total population. Many of them, rich in the experience of living, have much to contribute. Society should have the benefit of their wisdom and they the satisfactions that come from the sense of being useful. Increased years need not mean inflexibility of mind or spirit. But many older people, accepting the stereotyped notion of old age as a time of withdrawal from active life, often need to be encouraged to maintain a vital interest in the world about them and to use their greater leisure to do the things they have always wanted to but for which they never found time.

A club for older people, organized by the Cleveland Public Library, illustrates one way in which libraries can help to give this encouragement. The idea for the club may have been partially inspired by the Cleveland Public Library's service to "shut-ins." A special fund enables the library to carry its services directly to people confined to their homes by illness, physical handicaps, or the infirmities of old age. It is an educational service that gives the librarians unusual advantages for intimate and friendly contacts with readers.

But many people in their sixties and older are able-bodied and quite capable of participating in active educational programmes, as the Cleveland librarians knew. Though the initial meeting of the club brought out only thirty older people, membership swelled to nearly 300 within a year. Rich and poor, retired professional men and women, business people, skilled workers, and others join in with little apparent difference of feeling among them. Programmes are planned by the members themselves and most of the activities develop from the spontaneous interests of the group. Creative old age, world government, Latin America, race relations, city planning, and housing for the aged are typical of the subjects explored. Members appear as performers at musical evenings, theatrical production, and hobby shows and often reveal unsuspected talent. Films are sometimes used to start discussions, and book displays and reading lists have led to increased and more thoughtful reading.

Cleveland's Club is a pioneer venture and other libraries, noting its success, are undertaking similar projects. But many older persons do not wish to be set apart and treated as a special group. They enjoy associating with persons younger than themselves and would

find reading clubs and discussion groups made up of people of all ages more to their taste.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES WORK WITH LABOUR GROUPS

The workers' education movement in the United States began shortly after the end of World War I as a self-conscious effort of industrial labour to improve its educational status. The first classes sponsored by organized labour centred attention on the immediate needs of the students — understanding of basic economic and social problems, and training for trade union leadership. Today the movement has expanded and many agencies are concerned with the education of workers. The number of summer schools, week-end institutes, and local classes is extensive. Some colleges and universities have opened their doors to workers, offering courses adapted to their particular needs. Curricula, though still developed around the special occupational experiences of the students, have broadened to include a wide range of practical and cultural subjects.

What are American public libraries doing to forward workers' education? The record, regrettably, is not too impressive. Librarians on the whole have been slow to realize their responsibilities in this matter or to recognize the opportunities it offers to increase the usefulness of libraries to their communities. Neither skilled nor unskilled workers are represented among public library readers in proportion to their number in the general population. Many of them are handicapped by limited schooling. They do not turn naturally to books, for they find reading a task. Often they are uninformed about their public library, regarding it as a place only for students and fiction readers. They are reluctant to enter a building that they look upon as formal and forbidding and they hesitate to ask for assistance in finding what they want. Libraries must take the initiative if they are to become serviceable to working men and women.

A Pioneer Venture

The Public Library in Milwaukee began a programme of service to labour groups nearly thirty years ago, and it is the only one that has been continuously in existence for any length of time.

This library began its work with trade unions by enlisting the co-operation of labour leaders. The Central Labour Council set up a Library Committee, invited the Library's Readers' Adviser to

address the Council members at an open meeting, and furnished her with credentials admitting her to all affiliated unions in the city. The library adopted the policy of accepting any suggestions made by the Council's Library Committee. When it requested that book service be given at the Council's bi-weekly meetings, the library acceded and furnished not only books but the services of a competent librarian. The original collection, titles recommended by the Council's Library Committee, consisted largely of standard and scholarly works on labour economics. Few circulated, though members evinced a cordial interest in the service. When the librarian brought books of her own choosing — short biographies, books on gardening, care of the home, family life, health, popular fiction, and pamphlets on social and political questions — they were in demand. Members began to call for particular titles and subjects and the library made every effort to fill these requests, even to purchasing new materials. By keeping a complete record of each person's reading, the librarian was able to adapt the book collection to members' interest.

The readers' adviser spoke before nearly all the affiliated unions. These talks not only publicized the library but provided opportunities for appraising workers' reading needs. An examination of the library's book stock, in the light of these, revealed hitherto unsuspected limitations. Specific titles requested were often not available and most books on topics of particular interest to workers were written in a style too difficult for the majority. The library attempted to remedy the situation, but could do so only partially. Simple, readable books on many of the subjects in demand were not available from any source. Nor are they now to be had in any abundance. Twenty-five years of effort on the part of librarians and other educators have failed to produce books written at the level of the average worker's reading ability.

To bring books directly to the attention of as many workers as possible the library staff, with the assistance of the Council's Library Committee, prepared a series of reading lists, which were printed and distributed to trade unions with a letter of commendation from the Central Council. *And each list bore a union label!* Union headquarters with suitable facilities for circulating books were given loan collections.

A class in labour economics, sponsored by the Central Labour Council, afforded another rewarding point of contact between the library and trade unions. Class sessions were held in a clubroom of the library. The Readers' Adviser registered for the course, thus

obtaining an opportunity both to enlarge her own knowledge of labour problems and to study the reading needs of the students. Her election to the Educational Board of the Central Labour Council gave her a voice in shaping educational policies, while as class librarian she arranged to have appropriate books on hand for the various class sessions. A "Workers' Bookshelf" in the Main Reading Room of the Library proved popular not only with workers but with the general public. A number of the students became sufficiently interested in reading to form a Book Club, which met weekly throughout the summer months to discuss labour novels under the leadership of the Secretary of the Machinists Union.

To reach workers who were not active members of affiliated trade unions the Library sought and obtained the co-operation of employers and personnel directors. They provided space for deposit collections of books in many stores and factories and furnished assistance in stimulating interest in reading and in circulating the books among their employees.

One of the most valuable achievements of the early programme was initiated by the Chief Librarian. This was a series of round-table discussions in which both employers and labour leaders participated. The results cannot be measured in tangible terms, but the conferences promoted mutual understanding between the two groups and gave them a clearer concept of the functions of a public library. Both groups rallied to the support of the Library when there was danger that its income might be curtailed.

Labour and Management

The Public Library in Akron, Ohio, has had marked success in working simultaneously with labour and management. This city is an important industrial centre, the home of large rubber companies, and labour is strongly organized. A man trained in business and labour economics is in charge of the Public Library's Department of Business and Labour Service. There the specialized materials needed by both groups are assembled and handled. Commenting on the value of the service the Head of the Department writes :

1. From the library's point of view : Specialized reference and research services to labour are just as essential a function of a modern public library as such services to business. The public library is the place where the union official and the union member can and shall obtain the specific answers to the specific questions their 'business' requires.

2. From the union's point of view : Factual information becomes more and more important for successful industrial relations. Local

unions cannot afford a research department and the library is the only place for obtaining the statistical and other information they need for negotiations and for all other union activities. For the large national unions with specialized departments and experts, the library is the centre for essential additional sources and background information.

3. From the community's point of view: In supplying facts and sources of research both to management and to labour, the public library provides an important clearing-house for greater understanding of the economic problems in the modern industrial community and, therefore, makes an important contribution to better industrial relations. As with all human relations, good labour-management relations, can be built effectively only upon the invincible power of facts, research, and knowledge. [1]

This same library also maintains a Department of Group Services that works with community organizations. It has a very active programme in the fields of worker's education, similar to the one already described. The Department co-operates with the major labour organizations, both in their mass education programmes and in their small study and discussion groups. It prepares reading lists, sends collections of books to union headquarters, helps in the planning of workers' education programmes, and organizes and sets up exhibits for large gatherings. The Library's well-stocked film collection furnishes appropriate films for many labour groups. From time to time the Department initiates its own workers' education programmes. Frequently these are open forums built around films, such as, "Labour Looks Ahead," "Wages versus Prices," and "Labour and the Ballot." Prominent labour leaders in the community usually serve as discussion leaders and the trade unions assume responsibility for advertising the meetings.

The two departments — Business and Labour Service and Group Services — work closely with one another and together have developed a broad programme for workers' education that takes first rank among those offered by American public libraries.

Workers' Week

The apathetic attitude of most workers toward the public library has been commented upon. To stir their interest and to demonstrate the variety of materials and services available to them, the readers' adviser in the Minneapolis Public Library, embarked on an all-out programme, called "Workers' Week." A large exhibit in the main

1. Pragan, Otto. Library Service to Labour Groups : Akron Public Library. *In* American Library Association. Joint Committee on Library Service to Labour Groups. *Newsletter*. April, 1949, mimeographed.

corridor of the central building brought together in one place books, pamphlets, and periodicals scattered throughout the library. The material was grouped in four main divisions : (1) current social and political problems; (2) economic problems; (3) trade unionism; (4) labour problems and literature. These were supplemented by smaller collections, such as, "Home Interests," "Books for Parents," "Personal Health," "Consumers Co-operatives," "Art of Conversation," and "Reading for Fun." Large posters and statistical charts were hung on the walls. Tables, with easy chairs beside them, displayed magazines and attractive books. Registration slips invited comment under the query : "How can the library be of more service to you ?" The Central Labour Council assumed responsibility for publicity. Members spoke before all unions in the city and the labour press featured articles on the library and on workers' education. The exhibit not only attracted large numbers of workers but aroused considerable interest on the part of the general community. That "Workers' Week" was well worth the time and effort it cost the library staff is attested by the many requests that this temporary collection be made permanent.

The A. L. A. Stresses Workers' Education

The American Library Association has long recognized the fundamental place which workers' education should occupy in the public library's programme of adult education. To give continuity to its efforts to stimulate interest in this field, the A. L. A., in co-operation with the two greatest labour organizations (the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the American Federation of Labour) recently appointed a Joint Committee on Library Service to Labour Groups. This Committee is engaged in an active campaign to publicize successful library programmes for workers' education. Through a series of mimeographed "case studies" describing in some detail the exact procedures used by various libraries it is offering outlines to guide other libraries. The following summary indicates some of the methods it recommends.

1. Select a competent member of the staff, equipped by education and personality to work with labour groups. Knowledge of the history of the labour movement and the current problems of the industrial world at both the national and local level is essential.

2. Seek out the leading members of labour groups and enlist their interest and co-operation.

3. Publicize the library and its services in the labour press, at union meetings, and at all gatherings of workers groups. Make the labour world aware of the library.

4. Secure the interest and support of employers, personnel directors, and shop stewards.

5. Adopt a liberal policy in developing the book collection in fields relevant to worker's needs and in administering the library's services to unions. Go more than half way to meet workers' demands. They are seldom unreasonable.

6. Place deposit collections in union headquarters wherever and whenever possible. Maintain careful supervision of all such collections, renew them at regular intervals, and keep them alive. Circulation records and readers' comments are important gauges of interest. Do not be disturbed if some workers read only light fiction at the beginning. Remember that reading a superficial adventure story is an educational experience for the person who is not accustomed to reading books.

7. Use films to stir interests and to promote discussion programmes.

8. Know the criteria of readability and apply them in selecting materials for workers.

9. Work closely with teachers of workers' classes.

10. Do not be discouraged if first attempts to work with labour groups seem unsuccessful. Try again. The procedures may be at fault. Building confidence and good will requires repeated efforts

RURAL READERS

Many agencies concerned with rural life have paved the way for the librarian. Chief of these is the Co-operative Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, which for over ninety years has carried on a nation-wide rural education programme. In each state directors of extension services, county and home demonstration agents, and a host of trained volunteers, work to improve farming methods, raise the economic status of the farmer and his family and to enlarge their social and cultural life. Classes, demonstrations, discussion groups, civic, drama, and music clubs have been developed under the Department's auspices. To support this, nearly 30,000,000 bulletins, leaflets, and circulars, written in the language of the people, are distributed to rural readers every year. Other important rural agencies are the National Grange, organized "to educate and elevate the American farmer," with its thousands of local Grange units, the Farmer's Union, and many state and county health and welfare organizations. The rural librarian steps into the scene ready to co-operate with them all, to use their resources when and where he can, and to supplement their efforts with his own.

What do rural people read? Like the city dweller, many of them are interested in their occupations — they want greater skill, efficiency,

and knowledge. They want comfortable homes, pleasant family life, health and recreation. As citizens they are interested in community problems and in the larger affairs of the nation and world. Again like city people, their interests often require stimulation and direction. If in the country there is less leisure, on the other hand reading has less competition from other spare time activities.

Only a few examples of the many activities of the rural librarian can be cited. There can be no single pattern for him to follow because American rural life offers great contrasts in wealth, education, ethnic background, and types of farming. Wherever the librarian is his programmes are planned to suit the readers.

In areas where people have had few educational opportunities the librarian may have to start at the beginning by forming "reading aloud" groups. A simple book, magazine article, or perhaps a newspaper — whatever is most likely to rouse interest — is selected. As the librarian reads he comments and tries to draw his hearers out, to get them to express their own ideas and opinions. Local leadership must be found for such groups, for the librarian has time only to start them. But he keeps in touch with them and their leaders, sees that they have the books they need, helps to plan their programmes, and to keep their interests alive and growing. In Taos, New Mexico, where many of the Spanish-speaking adults cannot read English, the "branch librarians," high school girls trained by the county librarian, kept their communities in daily touch with the progress of the war by reading the newspaper aloud and showing on a map the location of places mentioned or where sons and brothers were in military service.

In a mountain county of the rural south the district nurse and librarian work closely together, frequently making their visits in the library's bookmobile. The nurse tells the librarian of people who need books and pamphlets and the librarian reports health conditions requiring the nurse's attention. The bookmobile is often used to carry mothers to the county maternity center.

In the more privileged areas of the country, discussion groups are often organized by the library. One has been meeting for years in the living room of the librarian's farm home, where the branch library his located. The semi-monthly sessions of the group must be constantly adjusted to the seasonal demands on the housekeeper's time, but the meetings go on. Their original interest, current works of fiction, soon expanded to include biography and contemporary history, and from there they moved on to many other fields. As one of them said : " It is so much easier to get a clear understanding of

the big problems of the day, like war and peace, and the United Nations, when we share our ideas and opinions."

Many librarians are members of the local Granges and work closely with them. One particularly successful librarian started her group with a series of discussion outlines prepared by the Department of Agriculture. The questions raised led to use of reference materials and other library books. Reports of meetings, summarizing the discussion and conclusions reached, written by the librarian and published in the county newspapers, aroused interest in other areas and led to the formation of new discussion groups.

Bookmobiles add films, projectors and generators, and curtains for darkening rooms to their usual load of books. The people in many of the places the bookmobiles visit have seldom or never seen a motion picture. On the day of the visit the audience gathers from miles around to attend the show. The films shown deal with problems near to the life of the people or present places and events from the larger world. A discussion usually follows, and the librarian has at hand books and pamphlets which give further information on the topic. County libraries are beginning to build their own film collections, but many films are borrowed from other agencies in the state and from the national government.

Recently some county libraries have been including records and portable phonographs with material sent to readers. Both records and phonographs are sometimes lent to individual borrowers, but usually only the records circulate. A library concert is given from time to time when popular operas, folk-songs, and "old familiar music" are played. Rural people have a great interest in music but the librarian must be sure not to go too far above the level of the audience.

The examples taken from both urban and rural libraries show that the aims are the same and that many of the methods and devices used are similar. But the rural librarian has a larger geographical area and a scattered population; the library community is usually an entire county (the largest unit of local government in the United States) or perhaps two or three adjoining counties. The library's headquarters may be in the nearest city, or they may be in the county courthouse or some other building where space can be found. For many country people a *library* is a bookmobile, a library on wheels, that travels a regularly scheduled route to make the rounds of its area, stopping to deliver books at small village libraries, where such exist, at country stores, schools, churches, and farm homes, wherever it is most convenient for the neighbourhood people to call for their

books. And with the bookmobile goes the librarian bringing personal service to readers. The books deposited at stations are in charge of a local librarian usually trained and supervised by the chief librarian.

Extending service to rural areas is one of the chief aims of the Four Year Plan adopted by the American Library Association in 1948. Rural library service is developing rapidly and holds great promise for the future. Jesse T. Reid, Director of the remarkably successful adult education project in Taos County, New Mexico, says :

In our opinion, the county library programme, including visual education, holds greater promise for popular education among rural residents of isolated regions, than any other organized service efforts. It can be a powerful spearhead for unlimited progress... Educational motion pictures are indispensable to such a programme; they pave the way for purposeful reading and organized study. Without them, inertia toward mere "book learning" may not be overcome [1].

PROGRAMME PLANNING

"Where can I find something on socialized medicine?" asks the troubled chairman of the Twentieth Century Club. "Our Delphian Society had an interesting talk on Unesco last week. We didn't know much about the subject, but now we want to make a real study of it." "Our programmes haven't been very interesting this year," confesses another club member, "Can you suggest some topics that are really worth while?" A noon-day club of business men wants a series of meetings on government housing projects, another group is deeply concerned at the increase of juvenile delinquency in its town. These are typical questions that confront the librarian. Each requires time, thought, and skill if it is to be properly answered. How can the busy librarian add programme planning for every local group to an already over-burdened schedule?

Many years ago the librarian of a small college library which serves also the townspeople struggled with this problem. Finally she invited club officers and leaders to attend a conference in the library. Before they came she gathered together an assortment of printed club

1. Reid, J. T. *It happened in Taos.* Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press 1946, p. 48.

programmes and prepared a list of topics in various fields. She arranged exhibits to suggest how some of the subjects might be developed and began the conference by commenting briefly on these. She talked about some of the library's tools — the card catalogue and the periodical indexes, explaining how each is used, and commented on the more usual reference books. The participants talked over their own plans, thus opening the way for co-operation among many community groups. Club programmes showed a marked improvement and the planning conference became an important annual event, attracting people from the surrounding area.

From such modest efforts as these has grown a new type of service, the "programme planning institute," regarded by many librarians as one of the most valuable and constructive of their contributions to adult education.

Typical of the more recent of such conferences are those held each spring by a County Library serving the area around Cleveland, Ohio. In 1947 club representatives, gathered in the library for a morning session, heard a stimulating talk, "Mental Challenge Can Be Fun." Then each representative described her own organization — its purpose, the kinds of meetings it holds, and what it might be able to contribute to other groups. In the afternoon members reported on their "best programmes of the year," thereby suggesting ideas to others. Next there were motion pictures. A film on India furnished the basis for a discussion, led by a panel made up from a club that had spent the preceding year studying India. Through skilful leadership it was possible to demonstrate not only how films can be used to stimulate discussion, but also how fact can be differentiated from opinion, and propaganda identified. At the end of the day's sessions each participant was given a copy of the "Programme Planner's Handbook," prepared by the library staff. In it were samples of attractive programmes, lists of suitable films with short descriptive notes and information as to where and how each might be obtained, a directory of organizations with their addresses, telephone numbers, names of key people, and a statement about the resources such as speakers and exhibits. Among the programmes was one on the atomic bomb, built around the film, "One World or None." "Food for Thought" was a programme on nutrition, and "Out on a Limb" one on rehabilitation of the disabled.

In large cities like Detroit a Programme Planners' Institute, organized originally by the Public Library, has become a community-wide enterprise. More than sixty leading organizations co-operate 'to assist programme chairmen in planning programmes of vital

community interest, continuity of subject matter, and social significance." A "Manual of Community Resources for Programme Planners" contains detailed information about important organizations and the type of assistance each is prepared to give to other groups and agencies.

Travelling libraries, sometimes equipped with film projectors and phonographs, serve the reader in rural areas.

The librarian helps clubs and other organizations in planning educational programmes.

CHAPTER V

THE LIBRARY SPONSORS GROUP DISCUSSION

AN INTRINSIC PART OF THE LIBRARY'S educational function is to supply motives for reading. Forums, study clubs, and discussion groups, judiciously devised, are conducive to further intellectual interest and afford valuable educational experiences in themselves. Some years ago, Alvin Johnson, commenting on the role of the public library in adult education, wrote :

> ...By and large men and women require the stimulus of group activity if they are to enter seriously on educational activity. They cannot be dragooned into education, but they can be led. This function of leadership needs to be undertaken by the public library, as the one permanent organ of adult education in most communities... This means that members of the library staff must be active in organizing groups within the library premises. [1]

Today many groups flourish under library leadership. Opportunities to discuss critical issues of the day, community problems, great books of the past and thought-provoking books of the present, draw people together in community-wide meetings and small neighbourhood groups.

Community Forums

The forum is an effective method of presenting controversial issues to large audiences. The subject is introduced by a speaker or panel of four to eight persons, representing varying points of view. A discussion period, in which both audience and speakers participate, then follows. The meeting usually concludes with a brief summing up by one of the speakers.

Illustrative of the community-wide type of programme is a series of forums conducted not long ago by the Public Library in Indianapolis. Challenged by newspaper stories about the purported ignorance of the general public regarding the organization and purposes of the United Nations, the librarian and her staff determined that their community should be informed. Forums, they reasoned, might

1. Johnson, Alvin. *The Public Library : A People's University.* New York, American Association for Adult Education, 1938, p. 76.

accomplish this purpose, but only if the public were made fully aware of the importance of the problem. Newspapers and radio co-operated with the library in a systematic publicity campaign. Bookmarks, inserted in all books circulated by the library, commented on the general lack of information about the U. N., ending with the statement : *it is your responsibility to find out.* A special desk staffed by competent librarians and equipped with pamphlets, periodicals and leaflets, provided ready access to the means of finding out, Business firms donated advertising space in the daily press and paid for striking posters that were displayed throughout the city. A weekly bulletin, distributed by the local transportation company to all its riders, devoted an entire column to the library's project. The campaign was a success, for large audiences crowded the library's auditorium to capacity on each forum evening. They represented a cross-section of the population, coming from all parts of the city and the suburban areas.

The specific topics for the forums were selected by a group of citizens, and included : "Aid to Europe," "Universal Military Training," and "Atomic Energy." A panel of well-informed men and women opened each of the sessions, but audience participation was lively from the start. A United States senator found the discussions enlightening and stated later that they had helped him to discover what his constituents really wanted him to do as their delegate in Washington.

Reading-Discussion Groups

International affairs was the subject chosen for a series of reading-discussion programmes sponsored jointly last winter by the Public Library in the City of Washington and the League of Women Voters, a national organization with active educational groups in all parts of the country. Meetings were held twice a month, from 8 to 10 in the evening, in two branch libraries, widely separated and distinctly different in community interest. A well-known author and lecturer served as discussion leader. The library furnished films, reading lists, and special book collections shelved in the meeting rooms. To insure a common background on subjects discussed, participants read the current issues of "Report on the World Today," an informative and carefully edited section of the *Atlantic Monthly* one of the best American magazines. From fifteen to twenty-five persons attended each of the sessions and nearly four hundred books were borrowed from the special collection. In addition participants read many other titles from various departments of the library. Both

the Library and the League considered the programmes very successful and will continue them this coming year.

Circulating Ideas

The six discussion groups that meet in branches of the New York Public Library are described by their sponsors as "media for circulating ideas," — an aspect of the library's function implicit in Learned's concept of a community intelligence center. The objectives of these groups differ somewhat from those of the reading-discussion programmes described in the preceding paragraphs. Emphasis is placed on learning through the exchange of ideas. Printed materials play their part, of course, but success is measured less by the amount and quality of the reading of participants than by improvement in their ability to express themselves, to clarify their thinking, to support opinions with facts, and to develop reasonable respect for opposing views.

All the discussion groups are directed by an experienced leader. Branch librarians, or their assistants, serve as co-leaders. They assume responsibility for organizing the groups, scheduling meetings, and interpreting the neighbourhood to the Director. As the six branches operate in different types of communities, each programme has its distinctive characteristics. Groups average from fifteen to twenty members, though one is much larger. Efforts are made to keep the numbers small, but until more leaders are available the larger group will be continued. The meetings usually conclude with an informal coffee-hour when members talk over plans for succeeding sessions. Subjects chosen follow a natural sequence, one topic leading to another.

Typical of subjects discussed during the past year are : "Can we afford the President's 'Fair Deal' programme ?" "How does modern capitalism meet the needs of modern man ?" "Should the United States ally itself with the North Atlantic Pact ?" "How far should we allow freedom of speech to those who do not agree with us ?" "What does the crisis in China mean to us ?" "Is the European recovery programme doing what it is supposed to do ?" Phrased as questions the topics indicate the open-mindedness of discussions.

Film Forums

Public libraries have used the film forum technique in their adult education programmes for nearly eight years. In 1941 a Joint Committee on Film Forums, representing four national organizations, was appointed by the Executive Secretary of the American Library

Association. Its assignment was to promote the use of film forums in libraries, to study their effectiveness, and to help in the war effort. Since the close of the war the Film Council of America has been active in forwarding the film forum movement in all parts of the country.

In a film forum a documentary or educational motion picture, usually presenting some contemporary problem, gives a common background of information and understanding to the audience. A speaker or panel introduces the subject and, after the picture has been shown, points out the main issues. The procedure from then on follows the usual forum pattern.

An example of the way in which American libraries are using the film forum technique : — The head of a branch library serving a crowded neighbourhood, where people from many countries live in close proximity, observes that while there are no outward evidences or racial antagonism the various groups do not mingle freely with one another. She has displayed the pamphlet, "The Races of Mankind," which attempts to dispel ideas of racial differences, but it has not been widely read and many of the people she wants to reach do not come to the library. Then she notes that a film called "The Brotherhood of Man," based on the pamphlet, has just been released. She arranges for a viewing and finds the picture both entertaining and instructive, good technically, and suitable for all levels of education.

The librarian's next step is to select a date for the film forum, plan how she will publicize it to the neighbourhood, and arrange for projection service. Signs are made announcing the forum and posted in the library and on the front door, in schools, church halls, union headquarters, in the corridors of apartment houses, in stores and other places of business. Notices are sent to the weekly neighbourhood news bulletin, mimeographed leaflets are distributed to library readers and to various clubs. The assistance of clergymen, teachers, the nurses at the health centre etc., is enlisted.

As the branch has no auditorium, arrangements are made to use the arge open Children's Room on the second floor. Appropriate books are prominently displayed on the charging desk and in open racks. A very short reading list, attractively set up, has been mimeographed and is ready for distribution after the meeting. It carries a brief note, stating that the branch has books in Italian, German, and Hungarian, and can borrow those in other languages from the Main Library.

The forum begins promptly at 8. 30. By that time most of the chairs are filled. For many, this is their first visit to the library. The

librarian says a few words of welcome and speaks very briefly about the film and the purpose of the meeting. One of her assistants, who was born in Italy, repeats the remarks in Italian. The librarian says two or three sentences in German.

Though some of the visitors know little English as yet, the picture tells the story so that all can understand it. After it has been shown the librarian and one of her assistants tell what they learned from the film and end by asking questions, such as these : "Are there any differences other than language and colour that keep people from knowing and liking one another?" "Is any discrimination based on race ever justified?" "What are some of the ways we can learn to know one another better?"

The audience is hesitant, but by ten o'clock, when the forum ends, fifteen or twenty persons have spoken. It isn't so hard to talk before other people when you have something you really want to say. When the librarian asks whether they would like to have another forum, they applaud. And so the meeting ends.

This single film forum has obviously not solved the problem of discrimination, even for this one neighbourhood. It has, however, brought some of the people of the community together for an hour and a half. Perhaps a sense of neighbourliness will begin to develop. A few people have started to think about brotherhood in terms of the people who live in the same block with them. Some books may be borrowed, but not many. Later, the people and organizations whose help the library sought and obtained, will in turn call on the librarian to assist them with their projects, and so members of the community will begin to work together. And more forums will be held on housing, health, child care, and a dozen other subjects related to the lives of the people in the neighbourhood.

Book Centred Programmes.

The public library, which makes available to our communities the wisdom distilled from the world's experience, should also provide the stimulus and leadership for making such wisdom an active ingredient in the community's current thinking. And, because it should, it can. [1]

This, in brief is the essence of library adult education. To further intellectual development through reading, whereby the substance of books is assimilated to the reader's own uses, is the motive that underlies all soundly conceived projects of the public library.

7. Powell, John. One Step nearer Leadership. *Library Journal* 71 : 443. April 1, 1946.

Book centred programmes offer the most effective means of bringing groups of readers and books together in situations conducive to critical appraisal and constructive thinking. But to be successful such programmes require leaders who have not only mastered the contents of books but have clear understanding of readers and skill in evoking responses. Too often the book lecture or review serves as a substitute for reading. It *can* be used to direct attention to writers and books that might not otherwise be appreciated, or to encourage more purposeful reading. The most valuable kind of programme, however, calls for active participation by members of a group, all of whom have read the book and come prepared to talk about it.

There are many examples of library-sponsored book groups that might be cited. A book reviewing club organized by a small city library has been selected because it suggests the possibilities inherent in such a venture. The librarian began by calling together a number of local people representing various interests. They agreed with her that the community needed the kind of cultural stimulation well presented book reviews might give and consented to serve as an advisory committee. From then on they met regularly, helping to decide the kinds of books to be reviewed, who should do the reviewing, the date and evenings most likely to draw a crowd, and ways of publicizing the programmes. The meetings were successful from the start and became a monthly event that brought as many as 300 people together in the library auditorium, to hear a lawyer talk about books on social and economic subjects, a doctor discuss some of the best books on mental hygiene, the librarian's own review of current plays, the high school principal's summary of educational trends presented in recent books. The programmes were varied. A single book or author might be featured, or a group of books on a particular subject, or a miscellaneous assortment of the best of the newer books. Among the important results were : (1) a marked increase in demand for the better non-fiction books at the library, (2) the number of small book discussion groups that sprouted here and there throughout the community, and (3) the spread of the book club idea to nearby cities and villages. The success of the undertaking is attributable to the quality of the leadership *and of the reviews* and to the fact that it met a very real though largely unrecognized need of the people themselves.

A type of book discussion group, popular at the present time, originated outside the library but is finding some of its staunchest supporters among librarians. These are the so-called "Great Books

Groups." Nearly 200 libraries have joined in the movement, some of them sponsoring as many as thirty or forty different groups. As the name suggests, attention is centered on books that have won permanent places in the world's literature. These are not read because they are classics, but because they embody the great thinking of the past — the kind of thinking that can be applied to the contemporary world. At each of eighteen bi-weekly seminars two discussion leaders (local librarians, lawyers, business men, housewives, etc.) and an assemblage of interested townspeople spend two hours talking about St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Plato's *Republic* or other great books. The leaders, trained by the Great Books Foundation, use an adaptation of the Socratic method. They do not lecture. They do not answer questions. The *author* is the teacher and the function of the leaders is to help the group recall what he said, interpret his meaning, and evaluate its worth. Despite similarity of procedure, visits to various groups in the same community reveal a complete lack of uniformity. Each has a personality of its own.

Some libraries prefer to have book discussion groups select their own reading lists, with titles such as, "Significant Books" or "Important Books of All Times." And practical librarians know that the goal of the Great Books Foundation, "to develop a mass education programme which may reach possibly 15,000,000 in the next five years," is unrealistic. The high quality of the "Great Books" is not matched by an equally high level of education on the part of the general population. The library's chief task in the field of popular education is to begin with people where they are and to help them step by step to progress.

CHAPTER VI

TEAMWORK : LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER

A SERIOUS WEAKNESS of adult education in the United States is the fragmentary character of its programmes. Division of responsibility among various agencies has resulted in sporadic and scattered efforts. In only a few places has there been any serious attempt to plan sustained, well co-ordinated programmes. The public library, which occupies a central role in providing educational opportunities for residents of its community, would seem to be a logical agency to promote co-operation : that it is assuming this function in some localities is indicated by the following examples.

A University of the People

When a municipal university in New York City decided several years ago to launch an adult education project, it turned as a matter of course to the Public Library as the agency best qualified to find out the kinds of courses people wanted and to organize the classes. Questionnaires were distributed at the branch libraries and the librarians, thoroughly familiar with their neighbourhoods, organized more than a hundred classes in short story writing, French, Russian, Spanish, economics, psychology, drawing and painting, household arts, child care, and many other subjects. Housewives, business people, and professional men and women from sixteen to sixty years of age enrolled in courses set up to meet their special interests, and studied together in library halls and club rooms. Instructors are furnished by the University, but branch librarians assist throughout the term, welcome each class, explain the facilities and services of the library and keep abreast of students' reading needs. The project has been extended each year and its success is attributable in large part to the fact that the kind of education people really want is available in the familiar surroundings of their own public library.

The "Neighbourhood Colleges" in six branch libraries of the Louisville Public Library originated from "Great Books" discussion groups. Through co-ordinated planning and co-operative action between the Public Library, the local University, and a radio station, courses are now offered in many subjects free of charge. Any resident

Library discussion group leaders getting practical training.

Discussion after showing of documentary films.

who is a high school graduate and twenty-one years old may enroll in the classes held in the public library. Other courses are broadcast by the University. Transcriptions of the lectures are available at the Library for those not able to listen at the right time. They may use the transcriptions in the Central Library or in the branches, which are connected with the Central Library by wire network. The library's collection of films as well as its books is used by classes.

The Atomic Energy Institute

The most outstanding example of public library leadership is the Atomic Energy Institute held in Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library two years ago. Through the quality of its services over many years the Library occupies a position of prestige in its city. Always actively concerned with keeping the public abreast of current affairs, it was natural that the Library should select the atomic bomb as the subject on which to concentrate in 1947. The project began modestly, but rapidly assumed greater importance as the staff realized how much the library might do to help people understand this enormous problem. All divisions within the library were called upon to co-operate. Then the library turned to other agencies in the city — universities, the Academy of Science, schools, churches, professional and business organizations, labour unions, newspapers, radio, and motion picture theatres. All responded. Posters announcing the coming Institute appeared everywhere throughout the city, radio and newspapers made frequent reference to it. The Library distributed 50,000 leaflets describing the programme and its purpose and another 50,000 book lists, "You and the Atom." Technical skill and funds were donated to develop a huge exhibit entitled "Atomic Energy : Force for Life or Chaos." Located in the Central Hall where it could be seen at once by everyone entering the library, it told the story of atomic energy and its implications for mankind. Five Sunday lectures by notable speakers were planned as a main feature of the Institute, to be supplemented by film showings, discussion groups, and all the other usual methods used to inform people. Important books bearing on the subject were made available by the hundred in the Central Library and the branches. Each branch developed its own exhibit, publicized the Institute in its neighbourhood, and organized study and reading groups.

Arrangements had been made to accommodate 1,500 people for the Sunday lectures, but the crowd was far larger and after the first lecture an auditorium on the third floor equipped with a public address system was used for the overflow. Discussion followed

each of the talks, but the large number of follow-up study groups that developed were particularly important, and showed that the Institute had done more than turn the community's attention to the subject for a few weeks only. More than a hundred citizens came together to devise ways and means of sustaining the interest that had been aroused, and a continuing committee was set up. For months requests for speakers, materials, and suggestions for programmes poured into the library. "This project demonstrated conclusively," writes a member of the staff, "that it is possible to get a community aroused to read, study, and think upon an important issue."

Great Issues Programme

The significance of what this library had accomplished through its Atomic Energy Institute and why it had been able to do so was realized at once by leading public librarians. A group of them met and discussed plans for an educational program on a national scale. This was the origin of the "Great Issues Programme," organized by the American Library Association. The *A. L. A. Bulletin*, the *Booklist*, and special announcements focus attention on the Programme. The first five "Great Issues" were selected by a poll of leaders in business, labour, agriculture, science, and other fields. These were : The Marshall Plan, Pro and Con; United States-Russian Relations; Inflation and Deflation; Management-Labour Relations; Civil Rights; How Much World Government?

The objective of the programme, as stated in the *Booklist* is the development of "a citizenry that understands the crucial problems facing our people today." "Libraries will have to provide the leadership," the article continues, " formal education alone cannot do the job, nor newspapers, radio, and magazines. The libraries of our nation must fill the gap by promoting and stimulating reading and discussion of the Great Issues". [1] Outlines for action on each of the topics were developed for general use. Suggestions include specific directions on how to get community action started, effective ways of presenting materials, and lists of books, films and radio programmes that contribute to understanding. The motive, the A. L. A. reiterates, is to "dispel indifference and misunderstanding through the wide dissemination of information." Libraries do not take sides on controversial matters.

Adult Education Councils

The information files of local adult education opportunities developed

1. *Booklist*. 44 : 397, August 1948.

by readers' advisers were referred to in Chapter II. These files indicate the scope and character of adult education available in local communities. Duplications, overlapping, poor distribution, and unmet needs are apparent in every situation. Adult education councils, made up of representatives from major organizations, have been set up in some communities, often under the leadership of the library. The objectives of the councils usually include : (1) establishment of a clearing house of information on adult education opportunities available; (2) elimination of unnecessary duplication and overlapping; (3) organization of jointly sponsored projects; (4) publicity to encourage use of adult education facilities; and (5) sponsorship of leadership training institutes. Few of the councils have been long-lived. Lack of financial support and of authority to take official action account for the failure of many of them. The writer knows of only one that has operated successfully for any considerable length of time. This is a Council with headquarters in the Central Building of the Denver Public Library. The Library played a prominent part in the Council's organization, but support comes from all member agencies and organizations. This enables the Council to employ a full-time, competent executive secretary and to publish an annual directory and bulletins of events throughout the year. The Library carries on one of the most active adult education programmes in the country and uses the Council to provide "a channel to all of more then eighty-five formal and informal adult education agencies that are Council members." [1]

Co-ordination of the many organizations and agencies operating in nearly every American community is essential to the full development and use of adult education opportunities. The public library is, at least potentially, best qualified to give the kind of leadership co-operative effort calls for. In an article on this subject Glen Burch, [2] then Assistant to the Director of the American Association for Adult Education, writes :

I believe that today more and more public librarians... have an understanding of, and interest in, community problems and are capable of actively sharing in community organization efforts. Perhaps the most striking indication of the rising interest and activity is to be found in some of our larger cities, where branch librarians are playing an important part in organizing and operating a growing

1. McNally, Miriam E. Adult Programme Works 2 Ways. *Library Journal* 73 : 1053, August 1948.
2. Burch, Glen. Public Libraries Fail Community Programmes. *Library Journal* 73 : 157, Feb. 1, 1948.

number of neighbourhood councils. In some instances entire library systems have chalked up impressive records in community leadership.

What about the future of adult education in public libraries? Carl H. Milam, formerly Executive Secretary of the American Library Association and now Librarian of the United Nations, summed up the thinking of forward-looking public librarians when he said :

1. Public libraries must concentrate more largely now than they have in the past on materials and services for persons who have some *purpose* in their reading. This will probably mean less competition with the rental library and the news stand, better service to serious-minded readers, and more effective co-operation with other educational institutions.

2. Libraries must be increasingly aware of social, economic, political, and cultural *objectives* and must learn how to use their materials and personnel to help people advance *toward those objectives.* I refer to such objectives as good race relations, religious tolerance, international co-operation, and dozens of others. Such action need not become propagandistic. It is not the librarian's job to tell people what to think but rather to help them decide what to thing *about.* In a good library community, it should be difficult for anyone to remain completely ignorant on important social problems.

3. The library must cease to be a book library only and become a *learning materials center.* Printed materials are our chief stock in trade and will continue to be, but we must also be aware of the educational uses of other materials such as films and recordings.

1. Milam, Carl H. Notes on Adult Education. *American Library Association. Bulletin* 40 : 213, June 1946.

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